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## South Africa witnesses a spike in anti-Semitism

NICOLA MILTZ

Lawyers are preparing criminal and civil charges following one of the darkest weeks of anti-Semitism in South Africa. There have been a slew of vile incidents that sent shock waves through the community.

In the space of less than two days last week, a string of vicious attacks committed either verbally, face-to-face or on social media were reported.

At least three people, who have been traced for allegedly writing disturbing anti-Semitic posts, will be hearing from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) and its lawyers.

Freelance writer Matome Letsoalo posted a number of hateful tweets on his now blocked @JustSmartRage Twitter account.

In one of them, he said, "@SAJBD The #Holocaust Will be like A Picnic When we are done with all you Zionist Bastards. Fuck All Of You."

In another, he said, "@SAJBD Must get Decimated. We Can't Have these Scandinavian Rats, Fake Jews, Zionist Bastards Running our Economy."

He also posted distressing Holocaust photographs, a swastika, and images of a burning Israeli flag.

When criticised online for calling Jews "rats" and "scum", he posted a picture of a semi-automatic weapon and tweeted, "I'm ready for you." He has since removed the offending tweets, but they remain in the Twittersphere.

Letsoalo has since been blocked from both Facebook and Twitter, and has been banned from writing again for News24, where he has featured in the past.

Disturbing tweets going back as far as 2014 allegedly show him to be openly anti-Semitic and racist.

His writings are full of pseudo-intellectual anti-white, anti-establishment, anti-West, and anti-Semitic ramblings. He describes himself as, "An African artist, owing my origins to my ancient Cushite ancestors (Afro-Asiatic) from the highlands of Ethiopia, the plains of Sudan (Nilo-Saharan), and the tropical forests of West and Central Africa (Niger-Congo). I am Bantu, I am Khoi, I am San..."

In another episode, Muhammad Hattia, 19, of Houghton, and Tameez Seedat, 19, of Bedfordview allegedly went on an anti-Semitic rampage on a WhatsApp chat group. The group – which includes Jewish people – is called SneakerHeads and apparently sells takkies online. The chat turned nasty last week, when the conversation touched on events surrounding TV personality Shashi Naidoo.

Naidoo made headlines last week after expressing pro-Israel sentiments on social

media, which led to her receiving death threats from anti-Israel lobbyists. She finally succumbed to making a public apology under the watchful eye of the BDS (the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement).

The backlash from the Naidoo incident included slurs and threats against the Jewish community, mostly on social media.

David Saks of the SAJBD said that it was "unusual" to see such a spike of anti-Semitism in South Africa. On average, there were six incidents reported a month, compared to last week's six incidents in a couple of days. In countries such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, this was sadly "par for the course", but not here.

"Things are getting out of hand. The racial rhetoric is turning feral and rancid. We can't just complain about it, we need to call on the law which is here to protect us, otherwise things can spin out of control."

King David Linksfield High School pupil, Jordan Landsman, 16, is one of the administrators of SneakerHeads. He threatened to block Hattia and Seedat after they allegedly spewed insults against Jews and Israel. He said on the chat: "This isn't a

politics group. I support Israel and this shit ends right here and now."

Hattia, who attended Greenside High School, is a first year B Comm Law student at the University of the Witwatersrand. He allegedly posted on the group: "Fuck you jew pricks. Fat nosed fucks. Fuck Israel the non-existent state. Fuck you Landsman for supporting the killing of innocents you uncultured swine I hope you and your family die. Hitler fucked up he should've killed you all Now kick me you Jew pigs like how you kicked the Muslims out of their state." This, among other abusive comments.

Seedat who matriculated from Benoni High School, works at Sharp-Rite, a specialist tool supply store in Commissioner Street, Fairview, said among other things on the chat group: "You fucken Jew/Zionists will see your time coming. Make our fellow brothers and sisters suffer, but what you don't understand is that worse will be coming your way. You homeless scums that came and took our land, we were the ones who invited you when you had no land, but you chose to be typical greedy ass Jews and take everything. You all belong in hell."

These are only a few of their comments. Lawyers have a dossier containing several more made that day.

In yet another incident, Polokwane businessman Christiaan van Schalkwyk of Audio Corporation sent a letter to a sales representative at the company of businessman Joss Pack, ProaudioSA. In it, he asked to be removed from the company's mailing list, saying, "I will never buy from that company while that jewish c&\*t and his puppy dog manager is running the show."

This letter was posted on Pack's Facebook page, causing a flurry of online activity.

Van Schalkwyk is now also on the SAJBD's and lawyers' radar.

In the same week, a mural of a German flag with a carefully painted swastika in the middle appeared in Hamilton Street, Coronationville, in Johannesburg. The Community Security Organisation is tracking down the culprits who evidently took their time to paint it in full view of passers-by. The Board has since painted over the swastika.

On the same day, passengers waiting for their luggage from an El Al flight to South

Continued on page 4>>

## From media freedom messenger to headline news



This 2015 photograph of journalist Paula Slier grimacing at the sound of a Grad missile being fired at the Ukraine army by pro-Russian rebel fighters created an uproar because it was misinterpreted as laughter. Slier faced death threats, and this week, was kicked out of the Ukraine and banned from entering for five years. See story on page 6.

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# Mandla Mandela's anti-Israel vitriol contrasts with his grandfather's legacy

TALI FEINBERG

During the multitude of anti-Israel protests that took place across the country last month, one figure stood up front and gave protestors the political credibility they craved: Minister of Parliament Chief Nkosi Zwelivelile 'Mandla' Mandela.

In Cape Town, Chief Mandela said that Israel had "committed genocide and crimes against humanity", and conveyed a personal greeting from the head of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh. In Durban, he said: "We want to call on our South African government to send the Israeli ambassador back to Israel where he belongs. He has no home in South Africa. Madiba said that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinian people. For myself personally, it is a continuation of Madiba's commitment."

But the late President Nelson Mandela was cordial and close to the Jewish community and acknowledged the Jewish State. He even visited Jerusalem, where he told the then Ambassador Alon Liel and Prime Minister Ehud Barak that he would like to assist in peace negotiations. He was never anti-Semitic.

This is in stark contrast to his grandson's recent statement at a Boeka (breaking Ramadan Fast) protest in Cape Town on 8 June, where he repeated an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that "the DA wanted to fire Mayor Patricia De Lille because she refused to accept bribes from apartheid-Israel companies".

On this statement, Milton Shain, the Emeritus Professor of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town and expert on anti-Semitism, said: "Certainly, the outrageous anti-Semitic tropes he uses go beyond the bounds of normal political antagonism and suggests an anger towards Jews as such. His language is inflammatory, and shows no sensitivity to a tough

and hitherto intractable political problem. Rather, he offers a simplistic analysis and crosses the line between hostility to Israeli policies and blatant anti-Semitism. I would hope that the DA deals with the insinuations he has made about the party, and rebuts his allegations about Israeli companies. At this stage, notwithstanding his pedigree, I don't



Mandla Mandela

see Mandla Mandela as an important political player in the ANC. He seems known, at least of late, for this single issue."

Mandla Mandela's anti-Israel stance is not new. It can perhaps be linked to his conversion to Islam and marriage to Rabia Clarke, a Muslim, in 2016. When he visited the Middle East last year, he refused to set foot in the Jewish State, only travelling in Palestinian territories. In Ramallah, he said "The settlements I saw here [in the West Bank] reminded me of what we had suffered in South Africa because we were also surrounded by many settlements and were not allowed to move from one place to another freely. Palestinians are being subjected to the worst version of apartheid."

He later said: "What we have experienced in South Africa is a fraction of what the Palestinians are experiencing... We were oppressed in order to serve the white minority. The Palestinians are being eliminated off their land and brought out of their territories. This

is a total human-rights violation. I think it is a total disgrace that the world is able to sit back while such atrocities are being carried out by apartheid Israel."

This visit to the region is in stark contrast with that of his grandfather, who met Prime Minister Ehud Barak, President Ezer Weizman, Cabinet ministers and Supreme Court

justices; laid a wreath at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial; and said, "I cannot conceive of Israel withdrawing if Arab states do not recognise Israel within secure borders," during his 1999 visit.

Just last week, the younger Mandela called on International Relations and Cooperation Minister Lindiwe Sisulu and the government to support the United Nations General Assembly vote condemning Israel, saying that the Jewish State had "committed acts of genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and a pogrom of Palestinians. They don't spare the elderly, women, or young children", he added.

"This extreme rhetoric is dangerous because it is simplistic," said Shain. "It is inflammatory in tone and devoid of sensitivity to the political context. Terms such as 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing' are crude and unhelpful. He has no sense of the dialectical nature of this hitherto intractable problem. All in all, one gets the sense that he is a latecomer to a complex matter. Sadly, unlike his grandfather who always entertained dialogue, it seems Mandla Mandela wants nothing short of Israel's obliteration."

## Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:08	18:01	Johannesburg
17:29	18:25	Cape Town
16:49	17:42	Durban
17:09	18:03	Bloemfontein
17:00	17:56	Port Elizabeth
16:54	17:48	East London

## Torah thought of the week

### Make time for reflection in fast-paced modern life

One of the main challenges of living in the technologically advanced society of the 21st century is the pace at which we live our lives. Not only do we have busy daily schedules, but the demands of modern society follow us everywhere. Unless we check ourselves, and consciously set time aside for reflection, we lose the ability to think. We need to reflect on events big and small, and pick up on G-d's signals.

It is not a new challenge, necessarily, but a human failing that has existed from the beginning of time. The Torah portion we read this week focuses on a non-Jewish prophet by the name of Bilaam. G-d talks directly to Bilaam on several occasions. However, the Torah testifies that Bilaam remained the same self-centred, morally degenerate individual after his prophetic experiences as he was before them. This is difficult to understand.

The Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan HaCohen 1839-1933) answers this question with a majestic thought. The Torah is not a continuous flow of text, there are breaks between the paragraphs. The sages teach us that these breaks indicate that Moshe stopped after various events in his life to reflect.

Moshe understood the importance of achieving a stillness in one's being, the value of integrating our experiences.

Parshas Balak is the only sedra in the Torah where there are no breaks in the text. The narrative is one continuous flow. The Chofetz Chaim explains that G-d commanded Moses to write the Parsha of Balak with no breaks to hint about the cause of the downfall of Bilaam. Bilaam never stopped running. In spite of being exposed to the most awesome spiritual experience on offer to a human being – direct communication from G-d – Bilaam did not slow down to integrate and reflect. Consequently, these experiences had no impact on his character.

This is a frightening thought. We can go through earth shattering experiences, and miss the point entirely. We all need to work on the skill of being quiet, blocking out the noise, and thinking.

Shabbat is a gift from G-d that facilitates this change of gear. It should give us the opportunity once a week to stop and think. It is so important for all of us to build the muscle of reflection into our lives. Without it, we will get lost in the maze of modern living.



Rabbi Danny Sackstein, Sunny Road Shul

# Zetler family birthday celebration turns into living hell

TALI FEINBERG

Beverly Zetler's birthday was to be a day of celebration with her family last Saturday, but it turned into a living nightmare. Her husband Jeffrey was murdered on his famous strawberry farm in Stellenbosch, in what has been described as a robbery and farm attack.

"We spent most of the day cleaning out a flat in Sea Point that my dad had recently bought and renovated," says his daughter Zara. "My dad loved building, and my parents wanted to get the project started. At about 13:00, he went back to the farm to pay his labourers. My mom stayed in Cape Town, and we were going to meet him for dinner in Stellenbosch to celebrate my mom's birthday that evening."

But at about 16:00, they got a call that Jeffrey had been attacked. "My dad had pushed the panic button, and my cousin Bevan found him. At first we weren't worried, as we assumed he would pull through as he always does – he has survived four similar attacks before. He was even poisoned in a farming accident, but he made it out of that incident alive."

forced him into his office, and made him empty his safe. At this stage we think they got rattled, so they continued stabbing him, stole some belongings, and left."

The culprits have not been caught, but the family feels it points to an "inside job" as the murders knew the routine, where the safe was, and Jeffrey was ambushed.

**It's unimaginable that in one of the most beautiful places on this earth such a senseless tragedy occurred to someone who cared so deeply about the whole community.**

"We thank the community for the outpouring of grief and support, and hope we will work together to continue to fight crime so that justice is served," say his daughters, Zara and Nicole. As the news of his passing spread, the condolence messages mixed with birthday wishes to their mother on Facebook became difficult to comprehend.

The daughters describe their father as the patriarch of the

more and more. Our dad employed more than 1 000 workers and was well-loved and respected by them, as well as by the extended farming community."

He was the Chairman of Stellenbosch Shul for 27 years, and in 2014, he ensured that a new, modern hall was built to celebrate chaggim and simchot. He was a source of advice and support for other farmers, and was on many farming advisory boards. In the business, he worked on farming practices, with suppliers, in marketing and everything in between. He took care of his workers, and recently built a church for them on the farm.

"This morning, as the working week began, the labourers held a moment's silence in the packing shed. The farm will go on, but it won't be the same," says Nicole.

She describes her father as an extremely hard worker who never complained, and was happiest working on the farm or other projects, so when he did take a vacation, it was precious time that he made an effort to enjoy. Just two weeks ago, the whole family returned from a holiday together in America. Little did they know, it would be the last one they would spend together.

Zara says that her father loved Stellenbosch, and wouldn't have wanted to live anywhere else. He was always positive about farming and the future, in spite of the family's fear that he might one day be attacked, and he always believed he could overcome any challenge – most recently, the drought in the Cape. He maintained the Stellenbosch Jewish cemetery, ensuring that it was kept clean and not vandalised, and this is where he was laid to rest on Tuesday, on the land he loved.

Jeffrey was just getting to know his young grandchildren – Zara and Shawn's son Benji, aged two, and Nicole and Craig's daughter Mila, 17 months. "The saddest thing for me is that he won't get to spend time with them," says Nicole. "His dream was to have grandchildren playing on the farm, like we did."

Said Rael Kaimowitz, the Chairman of the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies,



Beverly and Jeffrey Zetler with their grandchildren Mila and Benji

"The Jewish community is deeply saddened and shocked at the senseless murder of Jeffrey Zetler. Not only was he a prominent strawberry farmer who generated substantial employment in the region, he was also a pillar of strength for the Stellenbosch Jewish community. This is a tragedy for his family, his workers, and the Stellenbosch community at large. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family at this immensely difficult time. We call for the swift

disappearing in the modern world.

Wrote Belinda Radis: "Jeffrey was synonymous with Stellenbosch. He built on his family legacy to create the most incredible farm and community. Bev and Jeff were the centre of the extended families. They welcomed everyone into their home with grace, generosity and hospitality. We cherished the bakkie rides, eating strawberries straight from the land, Jeffrey calling the cattle in at night. Jeffrey so quiet, but caring. Bev,



Jeffrey and Benji on the farm

Yet what greeted them on arrival at the farm was different. Jeffrey had been stabbed multiple times and passed away on the scene. "From what we understand, as my dad was leaving the farm to drive towards his office, three guys were waiting in a car by the gate and they stormed his bakkie and began stabbing him. There were workers at the back of the bakkie, but they did not intervene. The three attackers

large Zetler family and its famous Mooiberge strawberry farms, as well as a highly respected leader of the industry and of the Stellenbosch Jewish community. "He was the youngest of the five brothers, but he really ran the show. His grandparents Mendel and Devorah came here from Belarus in 1904, and bought a small farm, and as their son Sam and five grandsons came into the business, it grew



Three generations: Shawn, Jeffrey and Benji

arrest of the perpetrators of this horrific crime and an end to all violent crime in our country."

On Facebook, tributes from all over the globe spoke of a man who opened his home and heart to others, and who anchored his family in Jewish values, love of the land, and family traditions that are

warm and effervescent. Your love for each other was apparent. It's unimaginable that in one of the most beautiful places on this earth such a senseless tragedy occurred to someone who cared so deeply about the whole community. Jeffrey will be remembered as an icon, and a treasure."

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# Cosatu's Refugee Day faux pas brings Jewish history to light

JORDAN MOSHE

In support of World Refugee Day last week, Cosatu posted a photograph of supposed Palestinian refugees on Twitter. Tweeple were quick to catch the labour federation out in clarifying that, rather than being desperate Palestinians, the people in the picture were Jews.

Cosatu remained silent on being outed for its faux pas, continuing to tweet as if nothing had happened.

In its online post on 20 June, Cosatu wrote: "Today, we commemorate #WorldRefugeeDay. Palestinians are the largest and longest-suffering group of refugees in the world says @BDSsouthafrica @UN @RTUKnews." It included the picture of the Jews beneath the message to show the "long-suffering" Palestinians.

The photo Cosatu used was taken in 1950 at a Ma'abarot transit camp, in which makeshift accommodation was provided for about 220 000 Jewish refugees who were thrown out of Arab states where they had been born, and which they considered home.

This photograph draws attention to a real historic issue. With the creation of the State of Israel and in the years which followed, thousands of Jews who had lived peacefully in Arab nations for centuries were expelled from their home countries.

Even in later years, having failed in 1948 to destroy the new state, Arab

rulers took revenge on the Jews who lived in the nations they controlled. Faced with government-sanctioned persecution, mob violence, and seizure of their property, these Jews fled. Most settled in Israel.

Jews who fled Arab states were forced to abandon their countries for fear of their life. No matter how difficult their circumstances, they have never taken any action against the countries in which they lived, and which eventually cast them out. These Jewish refugees remain almost entirely unacknowledged, and have never been compensated for their suffering or stolen property.

About 900 000 Jews fled Arab countries. Their property, confiscated or stolen outright by the Arab states is estimated today to be worth billions of dollars in value. These include assets such as buildings that housed Jewish institutions, shuls, factories, and personal property.

The former Israeli Ambassador to South Africa, Arthur Lenk, retweeted a response by a pro-Israel group: "Thank you @\_Cosatu for sharing a picture of Jewish refugees being absorbed in Israel as they fled from Arab countries in the 1950s. You see, back then we had the same problem as the Arabs. The only difference is we solved it really fast."

One user wrote: "Nice job. You actually managed to invalidate your own point by using a picture of Jews, the actual longest suffering group of refugees."

Another tweeted: "Funny how not



The photograph tweeted by Cosatu

only are you complicit in stealing our land, but you steal our history too."

Another wrote: "Thank you Cosatu for bringing to the world attention the plight of Jewish refugees exiled from their homes in the 40s and 50s. Truly doing good work!!"

Another maintained: "... We appreciate you highlighting the fact that many Jews also had to flee their home."

On the flip side of history, the Palestinian refugees left their homes in Israel in 1948 voluntarily, according to Edy Cohen, the Chairman of Kedem Forum for Middle East Studies. He said they were convinced they could return after invading Arab armies had

eliminated the Jews.

He writes: "As early as February 1949, the Jordanian newspaper *Palestine* wrote: "The Arab states encouraged the Arabs of Palestine to leave their homes temporarily so they would not interfere with the Arab invasion forces." This Arab exodus was initially encouraged by many Arab leaders such as Haj Amin el Hussein, the exiled pro-Nazi Mufti of Jerusalem, and by the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine.

"The Palestinians, unlike the Jews, had launched a war against their Jewish neighbours and made no bones about their desire to destroy even the pre-state Jewish community in the region," he writes. "Arab

League General Secretary Azzam Facha promised the Arab peoples that the conquest of Palestine would be a cakewalk. All the millions spent by the Jews on land and economic development would be easy plunder, he stated, because it would be a simple matter to throw the Jews into the Mediterranean. The Jews of the Arab nations had no such intentions against their own countries, nor were they remotely capable of carrying them out if they had."

Yet, none of this history seems to matter to Cosatu or the BDS. "The tweet typifies Cosatu's wilful ignorance when it comes to distinguishing between fact and ideologically motivated fantasy regarding the Middle East conflict," says Shaun Zagnoev, the Chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. "As the tweet shows, it goes so far as to use Jewish victims of Arab persecution as a propaganda weapon against the Jewish state."

The Chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, Ben Swartz, agrees. "Cosatu openly supports the racist BDS. This tweet illustrates its blatant ignorance, or follows its usual path of blatant lying," he says.

According to Cosatu spokesperson Sizwe Pamla, the photo and information were both provided by the BDS. Asked for comment, Pamla said that all questions should be directed to BDS. The *SA Jewish Report* made a concerted effort to get comment from BDS South Africa, but did not get a response.

## Phalatse reinstated

JORDAN MOSHE

Democratic Alliance Councillor Dr Mpho Phalatse is to be reinstated in her position as member of the Mayoral Committee for Health and Social Development. This follows her public apology to the people of Johannesburg on Tuesday for remarks she made at the South African Friends of Israel conference on 10 June.

While she did not retract any of the personal opinions she expressed, she recognised that her statements might have caused confusion regarding the city's position on the "Israel Palestine matter".

Phalatse made a public declaration at the conference, calling herself and the City of Johannesburg a "friend" of Israel. The statement subsequently led to the African National Congress and Economic Freedom Fighters calling for her immediate dismissal.

Phalatse was suspended by Johannesburg Mayor Herman Mashaba, who said that he had acted against her for "publicly" declaring that the city was a friend of Israel. "The issue of the conflict in Israel is complex, and requires a sensitive approach," he said, pointing out that he was disappointed that Phalatse had attributed her personal views to the city.

Offering apologies to the residents of Johannesburg for remarks which caused "confusion and hurt" to some, Phalatse said she recognised that the conflict in the Middle East was a "challenging and sensitive subject which, if not approached with the required consideration, causes acrimony in our diverse society".

Referring to the part of her address circulated on social media, Phalatse said that listeners were not afforded the full

Continued on page 18>>

## South Africa witnesses a spike in anti-Semitism

>> Continued from page 1

Africa were verbally abused in public, and called "wicked Jews" by a man who was allegedly deported from Israel and refused entry. The incident was reported to airport security.

The SAJBD said it was urgently pursuing each one of the cases with the intention to "vigorously pursue" every legal avenue.

Condemning the attacks, the Board said that the incidents had "generated great anxiety and anger" in the community. They were not only a threat to the Jewish community, but to the Constitution and the country's democracy.

SAJBD Chairman Shaun Zagnoev said, "Racism has no place in this country. And certainly, any minority group is protected by the Constitution, which protects our freedom of expression and association."

Of the social media posts, Zagnoev said it showed "how easily radical anti-Israel sentiment can spill over into hateful slurs and threats against Jewish people in general".

Matome Letsoalo also threatened attorney Ian Levitt, who acts on behalf of the SAJBD. On Sunday, 21 June, he tweeted: "You won't take me to court cause

I would Shoot you Dead in front of Police. Don't mistake me for the common Native."

Said anti-Semitism expert and academic, Professor Milton Shain, "...Often anti-Zionism is driven by a simple hatred for



A mural of a German flag with a swastika in Coronationville, Johannesburg

Jews. It would seem to me that for a host of reasons [not least the well organised presence of BDS with access to high places] the chattering classes are hostile to Israel and the Zionist idea."

He said that regarding "blatant Jew-hatred" on social media, "people feel unconstrained in saying the most awful things. It is new terrain... In a sense we are able to read today what was simply in the minds of people in the past. This is a new phenomenon.

"We have a worrying context. High unemployment, a failing state, huge and

visible inequality. The temperature is rising across the country in general, and Jews are facing part of the burgeoning hatred. Look at Malema and the Indians."

UK anti-Semitism expert and academic, David Hirsh, who lectures sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London, said, "Anti-Semitic politics and anti-Semitic ways of thinking, if licensed and legitimised by the community of progressive opinion-formers, really does become a politics of hatred. It metastasises into movements of hatred; it is capable of energising new followers; and it draws hungrily on older anti-Semitic emotions, images and claims."

Meanwhile, the ANC came out against anti-Semitism following the incidents, saying that the treatment of Palestinian people was not an excuse for hate speech against Jews.

It said the party's attention had been drawn to recent acts of "blatant anti-Semitism" by fellow South Africans on social media and graffiti on walls. "This is clearly against the spirit and letter of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, which discourages hate speech, against any group, based on race, religion, gender, creed, or sexual orientation."

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# Taking a kosher scandal and turning it into a gift

NICOLA MILTZ

The head of South Africa's Kasher Department is on a mission to turn the devastating Stan & Pete "treif chicken" scandal into a G-d-send.

The Managing Director of the Kasher Department of the Beth Din, Rabbi Dovi Goldstein, has been inspired by the recent review of the Beth Din's kashrut department by high-ranking members of the international Association of Kashrus Organizations (AKO).

The overall findings of the AKO delegation, Rabbis Menachem Genack, Moshe Elefant, and Sholem Fishbane, was that the "general setup of the kosher supervision system was sound", albeit "outdated". This, they said applied to all areas of kosher supervision, including food service, factories, and shechita.

The experts found the need for improved lines of communication between all relevant stakeholders including office personnel, mashgichim, and consumers. They found that not enough factory inspections were being conducted, and suggested ways to improve the situation.

They recommended ways to streamline the bulk of the work in preparing vegetables and eggs for checking. They also suggested using regular food-service staff that would allow mashgichim to concentrate on other areas of their kashrut work.

The experts agreed that it was necessary to train new shoachim to ensure sustainability, and to make sure their working hours were acceptable.

Most importantly, they suggested the importance of a liaison officer who could cater to the diverse needs of the community.

Goldstein feels energised by the experts' recommendations, and sees this new chapter as an "exciting challenge".

He says the kashrut department is already investigating the feasibility of taking a DNA swab of a piece of meat or chicken, entering it into a central database, and determining its journey from source to plate.

Unlike most countries, having everything under one kashrut department in South Africa creates a unique opportunity to monitor meat and chicken, he says. It allows the department to record how many kilograms leave the abattoir and cross reference this with the amounts used in stores or at restaurants.

"We are in a position to do what no other country in the world can," he said.

The three kashrut experts visited Johannesburg in May on behalf of the Union



Rabbi Fishbane (left) and Rabbi Genack assessing the kashrut facilities at one of the establishments

of Orthodox Synagogues following the Stan & Pete scandal. Their mandate was to review the kashrut supervision system, and to make recommendations for improvements based on international best practice. The three senior American-based experts spent four days scouring the inner workings of the Beth Din's kashrut department and its supervision systems.

"It is good news that we have a sound kosher system," says Goldstein. "We just need to innovate and modernise to make sure that we are in line with global best practice. We do not have to re-invent the wheel. We have listened to how the best in the world do things, and now we are ready to implement their suggestions and recommendations."

He said that ever since the Stan & Pete incident, members of the public had been raising their hands and asking how they could become involved.

"The community wants to become involved in all areas of kashrut. I'm receiving lots of requests from people wanting to offer their time. We welcome this enthusiasm."

The department has already started implementing changes based on the recommendations.

The first port of call is to offer refresher training courses and an annual conference for the 104 registered mashgichim, he said.

"Mashgichim are integral to the entire kashrut operation. They are the ones out in the field often working under difficult conditions in a pressured environment."

Goldstein said that many do it as a calling, and it was recommended that there should be greater engagement with them, including an

annual conference, and setting up a WhatsApp group to enhance communication between the department and Mashgichim. "This is not a difficult thing to do, and it's cost effective," said Goldstein.

He said the department had started to examine the feasibility of implementing modern technology as part of a check-in system for the mashgichim, such as a geotagging application that would monitor mashgichim.

"Two members of the community have offered to help with the costs of this call-in system for the mashgichim, which would enable them to call into the main offices of the Beth Din when they start and end their shifts."

Each kosher establishment will be encouraged to install CCTV with live access granted to the Kasher Department. This will be a fully automated internal control centre at the Beth Din, the feasibility of which is still under

investigation.

Goldstein is particularly excited by the use of the "thrip cloth" method being used overseas to check vegetables. "It makes the process less onerous and more accurate," he said.

After soaking vegetables in soapy water, the produce is removed and the water is poured into two colanders that have a cheesecloth sandwiched between them. The cheesecloth is then placed on a light box where the mashgiach can see any signs of infestation.

In order to increase factory inspections – as recommended – the department is considering using local Rabbonim on a part-time basis to undertake inspections in their area. They would be paid per inspection rather than a fixed salary. This will also cut down on travel expenses.

Goldstein said the department had been granted access to the Universal Kosher Database which would allow it to find ingredients already certified by reputable agencies worldwide.

This would cut down on the current system of reviewing ingredients, which the kashrut experts agreed was too onerous.

Rabbi Goldstein said the newly created kosher desk WhatsApp line had already received 1 500 queries even though it was still in start-up phase.

He said the department was aware that the community was under financial pressure, saying that it would be holding robust budgetary discussions to best prioritise the recommendations made by the visiting kashrut experts.

Most importantly, these changes and updates are not going to have an impact on the community's pocket. "None of the steps we've outlined are going to cost the community extra money," says Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein.

## 'Comprehensive' investigation delays Stan & Pete probe

JORDAN MOSHE

Law firm Bowman Gilfillan's forensic investigation into catering company Stan & Pete's conduct – expected to be finalised by now – will be completed only by the end of July.

The company – engaged by the Union of Orthodox Synagogues to conduct the investigation – issued an interim report on 12 June.

The firm was mandated to "establish whether the discovery of non-kosher chickens in February in the kitchen of Stan & Pete was an isolated incident, or part of a pattern of wilfully bringing non-kosher food into the kitchen".

It will establish how the "kashrut supervision system of the Beth Din with its mashgichim, inspectors and safety measures could have been circumvented, and recommend how the system can be improved".

The law firm said it had hoped to conclude its report by mid-June, but the process had been rigorous and comprehensive, and findings continued to be recorded.

Led by Jonathan Schlosberg, the team comprises Bowman personnel including Senior Litigation Partner Miles Carter, Litigation Associate Masozi Misi, as well as two analysts and two partners from the company's forensics practice.

The team has spent about 300 hours engaged in interviews, report transcription and compilation, meetings, and various other attendances.

An interim report states that the firm launched its investigation by interviewing the individuals believed to be able to provide the most useful background and lead information necessary for carrying out the investigation.

A total of 17 people were interviewed by the time the report was published, and a further 12 contacted by telephone, some of whom asked to remain anonymous.

Owner Jeff Shull was contacted, and declined to meet the investigating team. More people will be interviewed as the investigation progresses.

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## South African Jewish Report

# Do something about crime and unemployment

I remember the special times I went strawberry picking at Mooiberge farm in Stellenbosch. First, my in-laws took us, and we ate almost as many strawberries as we collected. It's a fabulous thing to do while holidaying in the Western Cape. Then, when our kids were little, they loved it too. I recall my youngest with his face covered with strawberry juice as he toddled around, laughing and playing between the rows of bushes. It was wonderful family time.

On this same farm last weekend, the owner Jeffrey Zetler was murdered. He apparently went to the office to pay his workers when he was stabbed to death. It was his wife's birthday. My guess is he couldn't wait for the day to end so he could go home to his brood to have one of those special family times. It is those special moments, picking strawberries or celebrating birthdays, that we keep in our memory banks.

I feel so desperately sad for his wife, whose birthday will never again be a celebration. From now on, it will be a day she will remember as the one on which her soulmate was so horrifically stolen from her and her children.

If a worker or five had a problem with Zetler, was there no other way to sort it out? Was it all about money? Was it drugs?



I have no idea, but what of the value of life? Every life, no matter who is living it and how they are living it, is precious.

Sitting here in the hustle bustle of Johannesburg, which is apparently fast and furious, we imagine life on the coast as peaceful. But somehow, this doesn't seem to be the case with violent crime.

I know crime happens all the time, but am I wrong in putting two and two together, and saying that this is the third horrific criminal incident in our community in the Western Cape in the past few months?

There was Charles Back, the renowned wine and cheese farmer, who was brutally attacked on his Fairview farm in Paarl in February.

Then there was the callous murder of Rosalie Bloch, 84, and Aubrey Jackson, 96, in their Rosebank home in Cape Town at the beginning of May. Rosalie was a struggle veteran, and gave her life to righting wrongs and fighting for social justice.

And now this...

When Bloch and Jackson died, I called on people to stand up against crime and, more than anything, to make a difference. I felt strongly – and still do – that the government needs to reinstate the specialist police units, and take crime more seriously. What does calling on people actually do? Not much. Perhaps it might get people thinking, and just maybe, someone will do something.

But what is this crisis of violence in the Western Cape? Is it something specific to that province? Perhaps sitting here in Johannesburg, I wish it were, but I don't believe that it is specific to that, or any, province.

Is it – as AfriForum claims – a farm-murder crisis? But Rosalie and Aubrey lived in the heart of Cape Town, and were not farmers...

I think we all want to look for scapegoats, and someone or something to blame.

My sense is that it goes back to the socioeconomic roots of our problem – unemployment.

We have an unemployment rate of 26.7%. That is a quarter of the population. In the first three months of this year, StatsSA stated that youth unemployment was 38.2%. In other words, one in three people in the labour market up to the age of 35 does not have a job.

What makes it even sadder is that of those, about 3.3 million are not even being educated or trained – they are simply disengaged from the work force.

According to StatsSA, the unemployment rate among the youth is irrespective of education level. The graduate unemployment rate of those between 15 and 25 is 33.5% and 10% among 25 to 34-year-olds. These numbers are ridiculously high, as is the amount of people who have lost faith that they will find a way of becoming contributing members of society.

What happens to those people? Quite simply, there is the strong likelihood that they will turn to crime. There are not terribly many options, are there?

Having said that, unemployment in the first quarter of this year was lower in Cape Town at 21.7%, than it was in Johannesburg, at 28.2%.

Nevertheless, both are too high.

I believe that there are few people who are born bad. Most of us come into this world with hope and dreams. If at every turn those dreams are dashed, what do we do?

As South Africans, each and every one of us – especially those of us who can afford to help – needs to reach out and lend a hand.

If we can't employ someone, perhaps we can help train them. If we can't teach someone, perhaps we can work with them to find a way out of their situation.

In our community, we have so many organisations doing just that. Are you involved? Can you do more?

I know this isn't going to bring back Jeffrey Zetler and Rosalie Bloch, but it sure beats complaining about crime and the government.

This is something we can tackle, and we do it well. Let's help bring down the helplessness of joblessness, and give people a reason to live and contribute to this country.

Shabbat Shalom!

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
Editor

# From media freedom messenger to headline news

## DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



Instead of speaking at a conference on media freedom in the Ukraine this week, I and a Russian journalist were summarily kicked out of the country as we entered, thereby moving from behind-the-scenes to making the media headlines.

While delegates debated media freedom and pluralism in the Ukraine in times of conflict, I was given my marching orders and deported from the country.

I landed up spending eight hours in the departure hall of Boryspil International Airport in the capital Kiev. The last time I'd visited the country was in 2015 to cover a story about fires that had broken out in the Chernobyl region.

After two days, my RT (Russian Television) editors pulled me out of the country as I was receiving death threats from Ukrainian nationals who hadn't liked my earlier reporting about the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

They threatened to kill, rape, and decapitate me. The posts were detailed and intimidating. What made it worse was that the online witch-hunt was started by a Ukrainian blogger, who had picked up from my tweets where I was in the country, and had encouraged people to find me.

When someone from the journalistic fraternity crosses the line, spewing hate speech and encouraging violence, it creates a dangerous precedent for the fanatics who have no problem acting out his words.

So, it wasn't an easy decision to return to Kiev. As far as I knew, I wasn't on any blacklist, and I was intending to participate in a conference on press freedom organised by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Oh, the irony!

The Ukrainian authorities flagged my passport at customs, took me to a side room for an hour-and-a-half, and then gave me a declaration to sign that I was expelled from the country and banned for the next five years.

The OSCE issued a statement saying that it was "regretful" that I had been prevented from entering. So, while conference delegates discussed how to ensure press freedom, I was waiting on the other side for a flight to take me out. The border guards treated me decently. They would not explain why I had been listed as an "enemy of the state". When I was pulled aside, the officers disappeared behind a closed door and emerged only to ask me for my press credentials and purpose of visit. I presented them with my RT badge and the OSCE conference agenda. They disappeared again, and I was left to WhatsApp my driver waiting on the other side, my editors in Moscow – who were concerned – and my family.

Seated alongside me were two Palestinians who had received visas to enter the Ukraine, but who were now told they could not enter. There was a Russian national who wanted a visa to visit the United States and was hoping to apply for one from the American embassy in Kiev. He did this because it took longer than a year for such requests to be processed in Moscow where the US consulate had closed. I couldn't work out if I felt important or sidelined.

A Russian colleague who I'd last seen in 2011 was

visiting the Ukraine for the first time since he was a child. He was attending the same conference as myself, and had not reported from the Ukraine during the recent conflict. Within 20 minutes, he was told he could not enter and was banned for five years. Soon, I received the same bad news.

The border officer who called me into his office spoke English, and explained that, "in accordance with Ukrainian law regarding border control, there is a decision to ban your entrance of the state border to Ukraine". I was asked to sign a declaration in Ukrainian that stated that he had informed me of this, and I had understood.

I was in a state of shock. There was no time to comprehend what he was saying, let alone put up a fight. I was immediately escorted out of the arrivals hall by two heavily armed men and taken to fetch my luggage that by now had been placed in the "lost and found" department. I was then left with my bags in the departure hall, but without my passport, and any explanation of what would happen next.

It could have been worse, and for this I am grateful. I was able to organise a late afternoon flight to Berlin, and I write this from the German capital where I'm reflecting on the past 24 hours.

Was it a surprise? In retrospect, no. Do I feel angry? Yes. Am I sad? Yes.

I attend many journalism conferences around the world where I am often a guest speaker on issues related to press freedom, the safety of journalists, propaganda, and Middle East reporting. I have participated in at least half a dozen OSCE workshops like the one held in Kiev under the auspices of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Its task is to help journalists, media workers, and countries establish a climate of media freedom and pluralism across the OSCE region.

There is a real challenge facing the media fraternity nowadays. Public trust is at an all-time low, and new technology has resulted in people picking up a phone, filming something, posting it online, and calling themselves a journalist.

Charges of "fake news" are levelled against media outlets that broadcast an unfavourable view, and journalists are being killed in greater numbers than ever.

No longer are we the messengers; more frequently we are the news.

Take my deportation for example. The real story is not about me being prevented from entering into the Ukraine, rather about what this says about press freedom in a country where the government views Russian journalists as criminals.

I am seen as a "propagandist", hence my deportation is justified and encouraged by the authorities. But what exactly is propaganda, especially if one person's truth is another person's lie? If I've learnt anything over the past 20 years of reporting, it is that there are always many sides to one story.

What happened to me is not just about Ukraine-Russia politics. It is about the media fraternity, which is being forced on its head, and is struggling to redefine itself at a time when not everybody agrees what press freedom is, and who should be afforded it.

• Paula Slier is the Middle East Bureau Chief of Russia Today (RT), the founder and CEO of Newshound Media and the inaugural winner of the Europcar Woman in Leadership Award of the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.



# Part hate, part love: Evaluating the new Hate Speech Bill

## OPINION

Mark Oppenheimer



The Department of Justice has produced a revised draft of the much-maligned Hate Speech Bill.

Two years ago, civil society organisations made more than seventy thousand submissions on the original draft. Many of the submissions argued that the draconian legislation would prohibit more than genuine hate speech, and would be a serious infringement on the constitutional right to freedom of expression. Before critiquing the old bill and evaluating the new one, we need to understand the true ambit of free speech.

Our courts have held that, "In a free society, all freedoms are important, but they are not equally important. Political philosophers are agreed about the primacy of the freedom of speech. It is the freedom upon which all the other freedoms depend; it is the freedom without which the others would not long endure.

"Under the new constitutional dispensation in this country, expressive activity is prima facie protected, no matter how repulsive, degrading, offensive or unacceptable society, or the majority of society, might consider it to be.

"What is not protected by the Constitution is expression or speech that amounts to 'advocacy of hatred', that is based on... race, ethnicity, gender, or religion, and which amounts to 'incitement to cause harm'."

Vulnerable groups are entitled to protection from people who incite harm and violence against them by means of hateful language. No society can tolerate genuine hate speech, and none defends such speech by invoking the right to free expression. Given that so much depends on how we understand the term, it's vital that we get the definition right.

### The old Bill

The prior draft prohibited speech that was merely insulting or intended to make fun of people. Telling jokes about lawyers and politicians could have resulted in imprisonment. The definition would also have prohibited certain religious teachings.

No distinction was drawn between the perpetrators of genuine hate speech, and those reporting on that speech. A demagogue inciting hatred and violence against an ethnic group would have been as liable as the journalist writing about the incident.

To prosecute a person for hate speech, the National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) had to grant authorisation. Prominent academic Lene Johannessen has written that "Prosecutorial discretion has often been used to prosecute minorities and other victims of racism, rather than to protect such victims from further insult. In England, the first individuals prosecuted under the Race Relations Act were black power leaders, and the law has subsequently been used more frequently to curb the speech of racial minorities and other activists than to limit the expression of racists."

### The new Bill

The new draft retains this defect, but requires the NDPP to issue directives which state the

circumstances in which a charge of hate speech may be withdrawn, or a prosecution stopped.

### Revised definition

Any person who intentionally publishes, propagates, or advocates anything, or communicates to one or more persons in a manner that could reasonably be construed to demonstrate a clear intention to: be harmful or to incite harm, or to promote or propagate hatred, based on one or more of the following grounds: age; albinism; birth; colour; culture; disability; ethnic or social origin; gender or gender identity; HIV status; language; nationality; migrant or refugee status; race; religion; sex, which includes intersex or sexual orientation, is guilty of an offence of hate speech.

**Under the new Bill, if you hurt your bobba's feelings (emotional harm) by calling her an *alte kakker* (on grounds of age), you could be prosecuted for hate speech, and spend three years in jail.**

The new definition has some similarities with the wording used in the Constitution, and is a vast improvement on the old definition. However, there are some issues worth drawing attention to.

First, the Constitution requires both incitement to harm and advocacy of hatred, while the Bill only requires one of these legs. However, an exemptions clause requires both legs to be met for bona fide

artistic expressions, and the espousal of religious teachings, to constitute hate speech. This means these forms of expression are given extra protection. Stronger protections are granted to academic or scientific inquiry, or fair and accurate reporting in the public interest, which are excluded from the definition of hate speech.

Second, harm is defined in the Bill to include emotional, psychological, physical, social, or economic harm. The inclusion of emotional harm is a dramatic lowering of the threshold, and opens the door to the banning of merely offensive speech.

Third, the number of listed grounds exceeds the four original groups listed in the Constitution. Egalitarians will welcome the expansion of the categories, while others may be concerned that this erodes the territory of constitutionally protected speech. Under the new Bill, if you hurt your bobba's feelings (emotional harm) by calling her an *alte kakker* (on grounds of age), you could be prosecuted for hate speech, and spend three years in jail.

In conclusion, the Bill creates severe criminal sanction for speech. It is an improvement on the prior draft, but it still punishes speech that has been afforded protection by the Constitution. Before enacting this legislation, we should remember a well-known Judge's warning that, "to deny free speech to engineer social change in the hope of accomplishing a greater good for one section of our society erodes the freedoms of all".

• Mark Oppenheimer is a practising advocate and member of the Johannesburg Bar.



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# The trauma of statelessness in our time

JORDAN MOSHE

There are more than 10 million stateless people in the world today. They are not necessarily refugees, nor are they migrants, and they may be living in the country of their birth, but they are not recognised as a citizen anywhere.

It touches a nerve for Jewish people, as “even before the Holocaust, Jews in Germany lost their crucial right to claim German citizenship as a result of the passing of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws. They were strangers in their own country”, said Tali Nates, the Director of the Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

International Refugee Day on 20 June commemorates the anniversary of the Geneva Convention of 1951. In this agreement, 145 states agreed that they were obliged by law to protect displaced people, and that refugees should not be returned to a country where their life was threatened.

Although the rights of those displaced are protected on paper, millions are denied their rights at this very moment. They may not be refugees, but their plight of statelessness is just as desperate.

“People often believe that if you protect stateless people, you’re opening your doors to a flood of refugees, people who will take your jobs, and make your society unsafe,” said Graham Robert Pote, part of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS), a non-profit organisation active in southern Africa since 2002. It focuses on political education, critical thinking, research and dialogue in the search for participatory, inclusive, and peaceful democracy. “The truth is that people who are living alongside you right now could be stateless, and you would never know.”

Together with representation from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the RLS held an outreach event titled “Ending Statelessness” at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre on 13 June. The event was aimed at raising awareness about statelessness and available solutions, and included presentations about the legal, political, and social implications of the issue.

“This issue stems from how recent a construct national identity and borders in societal devolvement really are,” Pote said. “If you think back to Imperial Europe, a Prussian’s idea of being Prussian was different to today’s German thinking of himself as German. In those times, people could move to different areas and reside where they chose far more easily.

“People are naturally migratory. Today, we suddenly have borders and nation states, and both are concepts which conflict with natural human behaviour. This causes the statelessness problem.”

Pote explains further: “Refugees and stateless people were both dealt with at the end of World War II, but because refugees were more pressing, they were the priority. Citizenship didn’t receive as much attention as refugees internationally, but this is not to say it wasn’t an issue. There were thousands of refugees from Europe whose countries changed names or didn’t exist anymore. They were first refugees, and then became stateless, which are two different things.”

This issue persists today, Pote said. “The UN developed protocols for both issues, and extended its policies to how people should be treated, and what countries should do for them. The convention on refugees came first, and statelessness followed. The real problem is getting countries to adhere to them. South



Africa is a signatory to the conventions, but laws and practices are not adhered to. This is partly because of migration, which politicians don’t like. They believe that if you protect stateless people, you will be flooded by refugees. Evidence shows that this is not the case.”

He went on to cite an example in our own country. “A Cuban couple lives and works in Cape Town on a work permit. A child is born to them here, and neither Cuba nor South Africa will recognise it automatically as a citizen. Effectively, this couple has a stateless child. If they leave, they are unable to take the child with them. The child cannot matriculate, cannot go to university, all because it has no ID number. Such people are living with us, but in a parallel state of existence. They are not getting the basic conveniences that come with having an ID.”

The foundation for which he works is committed to working with Parliament, groups like the UN, and individuals in academia to push for change at ground level in South Africa to change the existence of stateless people. “Short of suing the government,” he said, “this Cuban couple has no recourse. They cannot visit home

affairs and ask for a form they can fill out and submit. It doesn’t exist. We need to make a change in the law on the ground and implement practical changes. If we do, our fellow African countries will follow suit, and help address this problem.”

Any person can help, he stresses. “We need to talk about it, understand it, and raise awareness. So many people don’t. People just assume that being stateless is about being a refugee, but it’s beyond that. People in our society have no means to access the basic rights that come with having nationality and citizenship.”

Nates agrees. “Although we are not an advocacy group,” she said, “we work closely with non-governmental organisations and the UN to eradicate issues of refugees and statelessness in our time.

“The issue of genocide is unquestionably connected to xenophobia, homophobia, refugees, and statelessness. They are all interrelated. The issues of 70 years ago are still in existence today, and we need to address them if the future is to be different.”

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## Honouring a South African humanitarian giant

Absa  
Jewish achiever awards  
2018

JORDAN MOSHE

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?’” So said the late United States civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, in 1957.

If Luther King’s legacy proves anything, he lived to help those who needed him most. In today’s world, humanitarian values are threatened, and those who exemplify them are scarce.

The need to recognise unsung humanitarian heroes is therefore our responsibility and duty. This is the role of the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards Humanitarian Award, which is in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris.

“Like Rabbi Harris, there are people among us who give of themselves for the good of our society,” says Howard Sackstein, the Chairperson of the *South African Jewish Report*. “These are people who have made remarkable contributions to South Africa. The Achiever Awards seeks to recognise not only the achievements of people within our own community, but to acknowledge individuals from the broader South African community.”

Says Sackstein: “We want to pay tribute to someone who has followed in the footsteps of the great humanitarians of our country. People who have contributed greatly to the improvement of lives of South Africans of all walks of life need to be acknowledged.”

This award seeks to acknowledge unique individuals within South African society. It is awarded to any South African – inside or outside of the Jewish community. It aims to recognise an individual who exhibits true humanitarian spirit, and is rendering invaluable service to the people of South Africa.

The diversity of previous award winners is certainly noteworthy, says Sackstein. “Last year’s winner was former Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, a remarkable public servant determined

to battle corruption.

“Before him, there was George Bizos, a human rights lawyer and icon. Thuli Madonsela, whose reports into governance changed the face of South African politics, preceded Bizos. And before her, there was Jonathan Jansen, who has done more to improve the quality of education than many others. The list goes on.”

Says Sackstein: “We are happy to have an award that looks outside our community to broader South Africa, and there is certainly no shortage of people who contribute to the betterment of our lives on a daily basis.”

He says the fact that it is named in honour of Rabbi Cyril Harris brings a unique element to the award. Since 2006, this award has borne the name of the late Chief Rabbi, whose own mark on South African society is unquestionably indelible.

“We are delighted to associate this award with the name of such a great man,” says Sackstein. “He came to South Africa in the dying years of apartheid, and took the Jewish community into the era of the new South Africa, which was no easy task.

“The sense of humanity, fairness and outreach he and wife, Ann, extended to all South Africans was so remarkable, there was no question about naming the award in his honour.”

“Each year, we invite Ann Harris to present the award named after husband in recognition of his ongoing legacy to South Africa,” says Sackstein. “He was known as Mandela’s rabbi.”

“Not only did he bless him at the presidential inauguration, but when Mandela married Graca Machel on Shabbos, he called Harris to his home the day before in order to receive a marriage blessing from his rabbi.

“Harris couldn’t be there on the actual day of Mandela’s nuptials, but he was still so important to Mandela, that he wanted his blessing. The connection between the man and the award is therefore very special for South Africa.”



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# Ben Helfgott: From concentration camp to knighthood

JORDAN MOSHE

**A**mong the hundreds of British subjects on the Queens Honours List this June was Ben Helfgott, a holocaust survivor, an Olympic weightlifter, holocaust educator par excellence, and now a knight.

Before Helfgott turned 15, his father, mother, and sister were shot by the Nazis. He went from a ghetto to several concentration camps, transported in cattle cars.

And yet, 11 years after being liberated, he participated in the Olympic Games as a weightlifter, representing his new home, Britain.

This month, his life and work were recognised with a knighthood, and he will henceforth be known as Sir Ben Helfgott.

"I couldn't believe it," Helfgott said about the knighthood. "I'm choked. Obviously, I'm very pleased. All my life, I've worked to educate about the Holocaust and I will continue to do so."

The achievement is deserving of celebration in South African as well. Helfgott's wife, Arza, was born in Zimbabwe, and their son is married to South African-born Thea Kilov. Helfgott is one of a group of prominent Jews recognised this year for their contributions, including historian Simon Schama, philanthropist Lloyd Dorfman, and MP Louise Ellman.

Unlike other honours, the British Empire Medal is not awarded by the Queen or Prince of Wales, or at the palace, but by Lord-Lieutenants, who are the representatives of the Crown for each county in the United Kingdom, as it is seen as more of a community award. Although scrapped in 1993, the award was revived by David Cameron in 2013 to recognise "the dedication and hard work so many provide to their communities" and is awarded to "ordinary people".

However, Helfgott is no ordinary person. Ben Helfgott was born in Piotrków, Poland, and was 10 years old when Germany invaded the country in 1939. Helfgott and his father, Moïshe, escaped the initial roundups of Jews, and found work in a local factory. In December 1942, 500 people, including Helfgott's mother Sara, and sister Lucia, were moved to nearby woods and shot. In the summer of 1944, Helfgott's surviving sister Mala was taken to the Ravensbrück Women's camp and he and his father stayed together until they arrived at Buchenwald. "It was a terrible place. All we had to eat was soup that smelled like urine, and a crust of bread," he says. Helfgott was subsequently sent to other camps, while his father was eventually rounded up for one of the death marches and was shot trying to escape.

After the liberation of Theresienstadt, the last in his long chain of camps, one of Helfgott's fellow inmates said he was joining a group going to England. Helfgott joined him and



Sir Ben Helfgott MBE

arrived in Britain at 15 in 1945, along with 750 other children flown in by the Royal Air Force to be settled in hostels run by Jewish organisations. The new Labour government had agreed that 1 000 youngsters, nearly all concentration camp survivors, could be granted entry permits. After initially being lodged in a hostel near Windermere, he went to London, gained a place at Plaistow County Grammar School,

and passed his higher school certificate, just a couple of years after he had arrived in Britain.

His passion for sport led him to join the Primrose Club for young survivors, run by German athlete Paul Mayer, who had been hoping for a place in the 1936 Berlin Olympics until the Nazis banned him because he was Jewish.

Taking a particular interest in weightlifting, Helfgott competed in a series of competitions and became

national lightweight champion in the early 50s. In Melbourne in 1956, and in Rome four years later, he was captain of the competing team. Although he won no medals in either event, he subsequently came away with a gold medal at the Maccabiah Games in Israel, three consecutive times.

Helfgott went on to become a clothing manufacturer and a prominent member of the Jewish community, helping to form

the Holocaust Survivors '45 Aid Society, serving on the Board of Deputies and acting as a trustee of the Holocaust Education Trust for 30 years. It was for his tireless efforts that this Polish-born, former champion weightlifter was included in the Queen's birthday honours for his work on Holocaust education this month.

According to *Jewish News*, a Cabinet Office spokeswoman said: "Ben has worked tirelessly, over many decades, to encourage community cohesion and combat intolerance and hatred. He has used his public profile as a Holocaust survivor to ensure that Holocaust commemoration has remained on the national agenda."

Said Karen Pollock, the Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, "This is marvellous news and so deserved. Soon after he was liberated from the concentration camps, Ben knew that the story of what happened to him, his family and the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis must be told. He helped shape Holocaust education in the UK, campaigned for a memorial in London, and for a national day to remember the Holocaust."

## 'The old man' that was a much more than an heirloom

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

**A** little-known portrait by Flemish Master Sir Peter Paul Rubens was put up for auction in Johannesburg last week by Stephan Welz and Co. Auctioneers.

For almost 90 years, this oil painting sat in the living room of a Johannesburg Jewish family in the northern suburbs without them knowing its immense value.

It was bought by their grandfather, a paediatrician in Germany before World War II, and brought to South Africa just before war broke out.

The family knew it was old – and probably had value. In fact, they had a letter "somewhere" from Dutch painter and art dealer Henk Peter Bremmer attesting to the fact that it could be a Rubens. But, like a lot of objects in families, they had formed an emotional attachment to it, calling it the "old man". And so, it remained in their living room.

In 2017, interested in the value of some of their art, the family contacted Luke Crossley, fine art specialist at Stephan Welz and Co. Auctioneers. Though specialists like Crossley so often have to break the news to clients that their beloved heirlooms are fake and worthless, this family's story was compelling, indicating that the painting could be real.

Crossley, who told the *SA Jewish Report* that the family asked to remain anonymous, spent 10 months verifying that the painting was a true Rubens portrait before it was put up for auction. It has been valued at between R5 million to R8 million, though the price could go much higher.

The painting, originally titled "Portrait of a Gentleman", was bought by the family patriarch, a German Jewish paediatrician, in 1925 at Kunsthandel Komter, Amsterdam.

In 1927, art critics and historians Ludwig Burchard and Wilhelm von Bode confirmed Bremmer's attribution of the work as a Rubens in an article by Burchard, with a co-signed letter to the owner.

Burchard believed the work was created sometime between 1598 – the date of Rubens' appointment to the prestigious Guild of Painters of Antwerp – and 1609. The latter date was when the artist returned to Antwerp from Italy, following the death of his mother.

The doctor, who was also an art collector, would

often discuss current affairs with his patients, according to the auction catalogue. "During one fateful discussion, the true extent of the current political situation and resurgence of National Socialism was made clear to him. Resolving to leave Germany, the doctor took up an offer from one of his patients to secure his personal effects, including his art collection, in order to facilitate his flight. All of the entrusted possessions were returned to the doctor upon escape from Germany before his journey to the southern hemisphere."

The doctor also owned a painting by famous Flemish painter Jan Brueghel, which he sold upon arrival in Johannesburg to set himself up in practice.

Crossley pointed out that it is "very unusual" to find a more than 400-year-old artwork hanging in a Johannesburg living room. So to allay scepticism, he researched art publications, the Dutch national archives, and old auction records to establish authenticity.



Portrait of a Gentleman

The oldest record uncovered was that of auction house Jovenau in Doornik, Belgium, in 1740, when the work was sold as "Portrait of a Man" by Sir Peter Paul Rubens.

Over the centuries, the work has been held in Munich, London, and Amsterdam, before finally arriving in South Africa. It was kept for roughly 80 years each time, mostly in private collections, which is partly why the price is on the low end.

The painting is relatively unknown, and has not been in any major exhibition.

The portrait is a true representation of the sitter, with no sugar coating or idealisation, making it all the more powerful. The "old" man is painted as is, including balding head and sombre black epaulets. This was in line with the 16th century Dutch Masters' attempt to portray daily existence, which was an artistic revolution in its time.

"It's really beautiful," says Crossley, describing the play of light and shadow, delicate brushwork, and fineness of detail. The gentleman appears like a stern member of the bourgeoisie at first. On closer inspection, there is a twinkle in his eye and obvious humour about the face – indicating a complex personality.

The portrait is believed to be of artist Jan Brueghel, who was a close friend of Rubens, although this can't be confirmed. At the beginning of the 17th century, Rubens and Brueghel the Elder were the two most famous painters in Antwerp. They were also frequent collaborators, who over the course of 25 years from about 1598 to 1625, executed about 24 works together.

The auction, which was concluded on Friday, took the form of sealed commission bids. This allowed "buyers to do research, give the international market the opportunity to discover it, and to protect the identities of seller and buyer".

The work has garnered some international attention, and it could end up overseas. The purchase price wasn't confirmed at the time of going to press.

Crossley says it is a great privilege to have the opportunity to sell such a rare artwork. Looking at the portrait, and after a year of rigorous research, he says, "It's wonderful to be able to finally share it with the world."

# THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

## Poland amends controversial Holocaust law, nixing penalties

### TOI STAFF AND AGENCIES

Polish legislators changed a controversial Holocaust-speech law on Wednesday, removing criminal provisions for attributing Nazi crimes to Poland.

The amendments passed by 388 votes to 25, with five abstentions, following an emotional session in the Sejm, the lower house of Parliament.

The original legislation, introduced by Poland's conservative ruling party, sparked a bitter dispute with Israel, which said it inhibited free speech about the Holocaust. The United States also strongly opposed the legislation, warning that it harmed Poland's strategic relations with Israel and the US.

A key paragraph of the law stated, "Whoever claims, publicly and contrary to the facts, that the Polish nation or the Republic of Poland is responsible or co-responsible for Nazi crimes committed by the Third Reich... or for other felonies that constitute crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, or war crimes, or whoever otherwise grossly diminishes the responsibility of the true perpetrators of said crimes – shall be liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to three years."

The new draft Bill was presented to Parliament by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, and legislators held an emotional debate, with members of the opposition lashing out at the Law and Justice Party for passing the law in the first place.

Stefan Niesiolowski of Civic Platform called the original law "idiocy", while Kamila Gasiuk-Pihowicz, of the Modern Party, asked why it had taken the ruling party half a year to reverse course on a move that had harmed Poland's most important international relationships.

"Why so late? Why did so much have to be broken?" she said to legislators.

The new version removes the penal provisions, and is likely to allow Poland to repair its international standing and relationship with its allies. However, Law and Justice also risks losing some support from nationalist voters.

One nationalist legislator, Robert Winnicki, described it as caving in to Jewish interests. He even tried to block the podium, seeking to prevent a vote that he called a "scandal", but the vote went ahead anyway.

Morawiecki tried to put a positive spin on the whole affair, arguing that while abandoning the original law, it was still a success because it made Poland's

wartime history the topic of international debate.

"Our basic goal was to fight for the truth, for Poland's good name, to present what reality looked like, the realities of World War II, and we achieved this goal," Morawiecki said.

World Jewish Congress Leader Ronald Lauder welcomed the move, saying the criminalisation was "an egregious mistake".

"Poles are understandably upset when Nazi German annihilation and concentration camps are referred to as 'Polish' simply due to their location on German-occupied Polish soil, but it was an egregious mistake to criminalise those who do so, within the framework of a law that in its essence threatens Poland's good name and international standing," Lauder said.

## PRINCE WILLIAM AND EUROVISION WINNER NETTA STROLL THROUGH CENTRAL TEL AVIV



Prince William paused in his whirlwind tour of the region to take a walk in the park with songstress Netta Barzilai on Wednesday, bringing traffic to a standstill. After stopping for a gazoz, a carbonated soft drink, at one of the kiosks dotting the tree-lined street, and chatting

to mothers and babies – perhaps to share stories of sleepless nights – the prince was presented with a looper, a digital sound mixing tool Barzilai often incorporates into her act, but he protested, laughing, saying that she really didn't want to hear him sing.

## HERZOG ELECTED JEWISH AGENCY HEAD

### RAPHAEL AHREN

Labour MK Isaac Herzog on Sunday was formally elected the new leader of the Jewish Agency, against the wishes of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Through a show of hands, the venerable agency's board of governors unanimously elected Herzog, a former cabinet minister and currently the leader of the opposition, to succeed Nathan Sharansky as Chairman of its executive.

"I take this challenge humbly. I know how difficult and challenging it is," Herzog said upon his election.

Herzog, who will need to give up his Knesset seat, is expected to assume office later this summer. It is unclear who will replace him as leader of the opposition on 1 August.

Netanyahu wanted his confidant, Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz, to take the agency position, but nine out of 10 members of the Jewish Agency's Leadership Nominating Committee voted for Herzog and recommended him to the board of governors, which is convening in Jerusalem this week.

In his acceptance speech, Herzog quoted a famous saying attributed to Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, that "the entire world is a very narrow bridge" but that one should not be afraid to cross it.

"The world is a very small bridge. And the Jewish Agency in my mind is the narrow bridge that connects the State of Israel and the Jewish people wherever they are. It is that bridge that created the State of Israel, and the bridge brought millions of Jews to the State of Israel. This bridge now has to confront the great challenges that face our people," he said.

The reference also appeared to pay tribute to his predecessor, Sharansky, a former prisoner of Zion in the Soviet Union, who famously sang the Hebrew song based on the Bratslav quote while imprisoned in the Gulag.

The Jewish people are at a crossroads, Herzog went on, presumably referring to a widening rift between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora, especially regarding the Western Wall and the refusal of Israel to formally recognise non-Orthodox streams of Judaism.

"We have to do whatever we can to unify the Jewish people and make sure it is not split and divided. We all know what we are talking about," Herzog said.

"We have to strengthen the centrality of Israel within the heart of every Jew, especially the younger generations, to fight BDS [the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement], to educate, to connect, and to promote aliya [immigration], to Israel," Herzog added.

## NETANYAHU HAILS IRANIAN PEOPLE'S 'COURAGE' IN ANTI-REGIME PROTESTS

### TOI STAFF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Iranians on Wednesday for showing "courage" in mass protests this week against their government and its economic policies, following the collapse of the country's currency amid the renewal of United States nuclear sanctions.

The protests, which began on Monday in Tehran and continued around the country – including economically hard-hit cities like Kermanshah in western Iran – featured shouts of "Death to Palestine", "No to Gaza, no to Lebanon" and "Leave Syria and think of us", highlighting Iran's continued support for Palestinian groups and Syrian President Bashar

Assad despite Iran's dire economic state. Chants of "We don't want the ayatollahs", and "Death to the dictator", were also heard at some rallies.

Showcasing his soccer skills in a video posted on social media, Netanyahu drew a parallel between the demonstrations and the Iranian soccer team's

"impossible" feat on Monday, when it scored a 1-1 draw against Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in the FIFA World Cup.

"To the Iranian people, I say, 'You showed courage on the playing field, and today, you showed the same courage on the streets of Iran,'" the Prime Minister said in the video.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

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# Citing 'new spirit' at Unesco, Israeli envoy wants to rethink withdrawal

RAPHAEL AHREN

Israel's envoy to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) on Tuesday suggested a rethink of the country's planned exit from the world cultural body, citing a "new spirit" in the organisation after it agreed to delay a series of resolutions critical of the Jewish state.



Diplomats at Unesco

Photo: AP Photo/Christophe Ena

"I was the first to recommend leaving the organisation after the United States announced its withdrawal, but Israel must not ignore the new spirit emanating from Unesco, and we need to re-evaluate, in full co-ordination with the US, the question of leaving," Ambassador Carmel Shama Hacohen said.

Jerusalem and Washington should at least consider "a certain delay" of their withdrawal in order to signal that, "If all the politics and the going after Israel will be history, Israel has an interest in co-operating in a positive way on the issues of education, culture, and science with all the nations of the world, especially our neighbours," the diplomat said in a statement sent to Israeli reporters.

Israel and the US announced at the beginning of the year that they would leave the group by the end of 2018.

Shama Hacohen issued the statement after two resolutions, regarding the old cities of Jerusalem and Hebron, were delayed by one year by the agency's World Heritage Committee, which is currently convening in Manama, Bahrain.

Although Shama Hacohen is not attending the conference, due to security concerns and the fact that Israel and Bahrain do not have diplomatic ties, it was decided that the two resolutions would be delayed without debate for a year.

This move, brokered by the US and Unesco Director-General Audrey Azoulay, was made in accordance with agreements reached in Paris earlier this year, Shama Hacohen said.

The Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office declined to comment on Shama Hacohen's comments.

In April, Unesco's executive board agreed to delay by at least six months voting on two resolutions, one on Gaza and another on Jerusalem, that Israel considered "extreme". Following negotiations between the Israeli delegation and the Arab nations that sponsored the resolution, the executive board voted unanimously to delay a decision on the two resolutions until the next session to be held in October.

The decision was welcomed by Azoulay. "I welcome the spirit of dialogue and responsibility that has allowed a consensual decision to be reached in the framework of the executive board during its discussions concerning the Middle East," she tweeted.

She said that the agreement between the nations heralded a new era for the international body.

"This spirit of consensus opens up a new positive dynamic within Unesco. I thank all the delegations that have worked towards this, notably the representatives of the Palestinian, Israeli, Jordanian, American, and European Union delegations," she wrote at the time. "This outcome bears witness to the parties' strong commitment to work together, including on the most sensitive issues."

Last October, the US and Israel decided to withdraw from Unesco, citing among other reasons, the body's anti-Israel bias.

Unesco is best known for its World Heritage programme to protect cultural sites and traditions, but it also works to fight violent extremism, improve education for girls, promote Holocaust understanding, defend media freedom, and encourage science on climate change.

In recent years, however, Israel has been infuriated by resolutions that ignore and diminish its historical connection to the Holy Land, and that have named ancient Jewish sites as Palestinian heritage sites.

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## Israel praises UN condemnation of terrorists' use of human shields



Photo: AP Photo/Khalil Hamra

**Masked gunmen from the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, a military wing of the Hamas terror group**

TOI STAFF AND AP

Israel expressed satisfaction on Tuesday, after the United Nations (UN) condemned the use of civilians as human shields by terrorist organisations.

The position taken by the United Nations General Assembly is aimed especially at Hamas, the terror group that governs in the Gaza Strip.

The condemnation of human shields was part of the UN's update of its counter-terrorism strategy. It censured the use of schools and hospitals for military purposes, as bases of operation, and locations to store weaponry.

Israeli envoy to the UN, Danny Danon, said the move came thanks to diplomatic efforts by Israel and the United States.

"This decision is another important step in our activities to change the rules of the game at the UN," Danon said.

He said terror organisations "hide behind women and children while attacking innocents".

The UN General Assembly also accused Israel earlier this month of using excessive force against Palestinian civilians during recent protests at the Gaza border.

Israeli leaders harshly condemned that motion as biased, and the US tried and failed to make an amendment to it that would have added an explicit condemnation of Hamas for firing rockets and promoting violence at the border.

Since 30 March, thousands of Palestinians have gathered along the Gaza security fence each week for often violent demonstrations, which have frequently included direct armed attacks on Israeli soldiers across the border.

Hamas officials have said the purpose of these border riots is to breach the security fence and enter Israeli territory. IDF troops, in response, have used tear gas and live fire against the rioters. More than 120 Palestinians have been killed as of this week, and thousands more have been injured, according to the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry. Dozens of them were acknowledged to be members of terrorist groups.

## Hamas won't discuss Cyprus seaport for Gaza before prisoners are freed – report

STUART WINER AND TOI STAFF

Hamas will not accept an Israeli proposal to set up a seaport in Cyprus unless Jerusalem concedes to its demands for the release of dozens of its members held since 2014, *Hadashot* television news reported on Tuesday.

The seaport plan, said to be under consideration in Israel is aimed at improving the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian enclave, which faces a lack of electricity, potable water, and food. It would reportedly depend on Hamas returning to Israel two of its citizens and the remains of two IDF soldiers it holds.

But according to *Hadashot*, senior Hamas officials say a precondition for talks on a deal of any kind is the release

of more than 50 of its jailed members – freed in a 2011 prisoner exchange and then rearrested in the wake of the 2014 kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens by a Hamas cell in the West Bank.

Only upon those prisoners' release will the group agree to

negotiations over the Israelis it holds, and it will probably demand the freedom of further prisoners to return them.

Channel 10 television reported on Tuesday that Israel had sent messages via international intermediaries telling Hamas it was prepared

to close a quick deal for the return of the civilians and soldiers held by the terror group, but that it would not accept any preconditions.

*Hadashot* said Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas also opposes the seaport plan, demanding that Gaza's plight be addressed as part of a wider diplomatic solution to the conflict.

Meanwhile, Lebanese newspaper *Al-Akhbar* reported on Tuesday that Egyptian officials would meet Hamas representatives in Cairo in coming days to discuss plans to improve the humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza.

The proposals include construction of a new trade zone between Gaza and Egypt, improved movement through the Rafah Crossing, and Palestinian use of the El Arish

Airport in northern Sinai.

Israel reportedly plans to pitch the plan directly to the public in Gaza, bypassing Hamas as a way to pressure the terror group, which would be hard-pressed to explain to the international community and its subjects why it did not accept the proposal.

On Tuesday, Cyprus said it was examining the idea, but that nothing had been agreed.

Two apparently mentally ill Israeli civilians – Abera Mengistu and Hisham al-Sayed – who entered Gaza of their own volition in 2014 and 2015, respectively, are currently being held by Hamas, along with the remains of two IDF soldiers, Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul.

Israel, along with Egypt, imposed a blockade of Gaza after Hamas seized control of the territory in 2007.



Photo: AP Acler Hana

Palestinian boats refuel at the sea port in Gaza City

## Rivlin asks Prince William to take 'message of peace'

RAPHAEL AHREN

President Reuven Rivlin on Tuesday asked visiting Prince William to convey a "message of peace" to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Hosting the Duke of Cambridge at his official Jerusalem residence, Rivlin said the Palestinians needed to accept that Jews had returned to their ancestral homeland, and that it was about time Israelis and Palestinians ended their conflict.

Prince William – the first member of the British royal

steering clear of endorsing any political position.

"I, like you, look forward to understanding lots about the region, hoping that peace in the area can be achieved," he said. "I am very much looking forward to really absorbing and understanding the different issues, the different cultures, the different religions, culminating in a visit, which will be very symbolic and very interesting for me in the Old City on Thursday."

Prince William, second in line to the British throne, was scheduled to meet Abbas at his Muqata headquarters in Ramallah on Wednesday.

these visits were not officially confirmed.

In recent days, a minor controversy clouded the prince's visit to the Old City, as Kensington Palace's official itinerary billed it as taking place in the "occupied Palestinian territories".

During their meeting at the President's residence, Rivlin stressed Israel's commitment to guarantee freedom of worship to all, but suggested that the political divisions between Israelis and Palestinians could be overcome only when the latter accepted Israel as a Jewish nation-state.

"There's only one G-d, and we are letting everyone worship G-d according to his belief," the President said.

The President noted that Israel had inherited much from British rule, including the Israeli legal system, which is based on the British system. "Israel kept many of the British customs and laws from the Mandate, but we did not manage to keep the same level of British football," Rivlin said. "I know you are a fan of Aston Villa, and I am a fan of Liverpool, but we can still talk about that during the World Cup."

The Duke of Cambridge gave Rivlin a Liverpool jersey, signed by former team captain Steven Gerrard.

## Prince William to Abbas: 'I'm glad our two countries work so closely together'

TOI STAFF

Britain's Prince William was greeted by an honour guard in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Wednesday, before sitting down with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

"I'm very glad our two countries work so closely together, and have had success stories with education and relief work in the past, so, long may that continue," the royal told Abbas.

"My sentiments are the same as yours in hoping that there is a lasting peace in the region," the prince said.

"The Palestinian side is committed to the peace process with the Israelis, so both states could live peacefully together within the borders of 1967," Abbas responded.

David Quarrey, the United

Kingdom Ambassador to Israel, last week defended describing Jerusalem's Old City in the prince's itinerary as part of the "occupied Palestinian territories".

"All the terminology that was used in the programme was consistent with years of practice by British governments. It's consistent with British government policy," he told reporters.

"The duke is not a political figure," Quarrey went on. "He'll be here to see a little bit of the country, and to get to meet some of the people here."

The Duke of Cambridge, the second in line to the British throne, was expected to meet Palestinian youth, and participate in events celebrating Palestinian culture, music, and food.



Prince William gives President Rivlin a Liverpool shirt

Photo: Mark Neiman, GPO

family to make an official visit to Israel since the state was founded in 1948 – also expressed hope for peace in the Middle East, though his formulation was vague,

On Thursday, the duke was to tour Jerusalem's Old City, where he was expected to visit the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Al-Aqsa Mosque, though

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## Syrian migrant confesses to Berlin assault on Arab Israeli wearing kippa



A Syrian asylum seeker of Palestinian origin hides his face as he waits for the opening of his trial in Berlin

Photo: AFP Photo / Stefanie Loos

HANNAH RUEDIGER AND FRANK ZELLER

A young Syrian migrant of Palestinian origin admitted on Tuesday to lashing out with his belt at an Arab Israeli man wearing a Jewish kippa in an assault that stoked fears of resurgent anti-Semitism.

A video of the attack, filmed by the victim on his smartphone, sparked widespread public revulsion as it spread on social media, and later triggered large street rallies to show solidarity with Jews.

The defendant, a 19-year-old Palestinian from Syria, is charged with dangerous assault and hate speech in the trial that was to hear eight witnesses and could reach a verdict on the same day.

The footage of the 17 April assault shows the attacker, one of a group of three, shouting "Yahudi!" Jew in Arabic, before lashing out at the two men, leaving one injured.

"I'm sorry, it was a mistake," the defendant told a Berlin court, while claiming the victim had insulted him first.

"I didn't want to hit him, I only wanted to scare him," he said in

his testimony, which switched from halting German to Arabic.

"I had smoked some dope, my head was tired."

Grievous bodily harm usually carries jail terms of three months to five years in Germany, but less under juvenile law which can be applied for defendants up to 20 years of age.

*Bild* daily has identified the belt attacker as Knaan al-S, who was registered at a refugee home in Brandenburg state outside Berlin, but went on to live "out of a suitcase" in the capital.

The victim who shot the video, a 21-year-old student, later revealed that he is not Jewish but an Arab Israeli called Adam Armush, who was walking at the time with a German-Moroccan friend aged 24.

Armush told public broadcaster Deutsche Welle that they had wanted to test whether wearing a kippa was safe in the fashionable inner Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg.

He said he had uploaded the video "for the police, the German people, and the world to see how terrible it is these days to walk through Berlin streets as a Jew".

## Prince William praises innovative Israel, urges peace

RAPHAEL AHREN

Britain's Prince William on Tuesday evening hailed Israel as a vibrant country that "thrive[s] on innovation, diversity, talent, and excellence," and said ties were at an all-time high.

He promised Britain's support in the quest for peace between Israel and its neighbours.

And, at the only public speech during his official visit to Israel this week – the first ever by a member of the royal family – William also pledged to uphold the memory of the Holocaust.

"Israel's remarkable story is partly one of remembering this terrible past but, also, looking forward to a much more hopeful future. There is – and I've seen it already – an essential vibrancy to this country," the prince said, speaking at a reception for about 350 Israelis at the residence of David Quarrey, the United Kingdom Ambassador to Israel, in the Tel Aviv suburb of

Still, he noted, "This region has a complicated and tragic history. In the past century, the people of the Middle East have suffered great sadness and loss. Never has hope and reconciliation been more needed. I know I share a desire with all of you, and with your neighbours, for a just and lasting peace. The United Kingdom stands with you, as we work together for a peaceful and prosperous future."

Earlier on Tuesday, Prince William participated in a soccer match of Jewish and Arab youth, and a beach volleyball game at the Tel Aviv beach.

"I got a flavour today of the unique character of Tel Aviv, its flair and diversity – and its beach. A beautiful city," he said at the reception, which was attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, several cabinet ministers, senior opposition MKs, and other dignitaries and celebrities.

On Wednesday morning, the prince was scheduled to meet more young Israelis involved in the environment, mental health, culture, and charity.

"These young people are painting a bright future for Israel, bringing their own energy and creativity to the start-up nation," he said. "These young people are also a reminder of how much we have in common – two open societies which thrive on innovation, diversity, talent, and excellence."

Ties between the UK and Israel "have never been stronger", the future king went on.

Earlier on Tuesday, Prince William visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial, where he met two Israeli

Holocaust survivors who had fled from Europe to Britain on the Kindertransport 80 years ago. On Thursday, he was scheduled to visit the grave of his great-grandmother, Princess Alice, who is considered by Yad Vashem to be a Righteous Among the Nations for saving Jews during the Holocaust.



Prince William with Jewish and Arab children at the Neve Golan Stadium

Ramat Gan.

"From the early stories of the kibbutzim; to the revival of Hebrew as a living, modern language; to the hi-tech economies that we see around us here in Tel Aviv, the modern story of Israel is one of inventing, creating, innovating, and striding confidently into its future."

Photo: AFP Photo/pool/Heidi Levine

# Fake news a 'nuisance', not a dire threat, says Israel's cyber chief

**SIMONA WEINGLASS**

Fake news in Israel is a "constant nuisance" rather than a major threat, the Head of the National Cyber Bureau in the Prime Minister's Office said recently, downplaying its effects on the country compared to the United States, where it wreaked havoc on the 2016 presidential election.

Speaking on a panel at this week's Cyber Week cybersecurity conference, Eviatar Matania said the effects of fake news could be mitigated with education and awareness.

In February, US Special Counsel Robert Mueller indicted 13 Russians on charges that they plotted to interfere in the 2016 US presidential election through social media manipulation aimed at helping Republican candidate Donald Trump.

"We should build a resilient population, which means we should educate people not to believe everything that they see. We need a vibrant and



independent media with different ideas, and we need everyone to take responsibility – not just government, but corporations," Matania said.

"If we do all this, we will be able to overcome the problem of fake news. I am optimistic."

Lior Tabansky, the head of Cyber Research Development at the Blavatnik Interdisciplinary Cyber Research Center of Tel Aviv University, said he had seen no

indication of Russian attempts to meddle in Israeli elections via fake news or other covert influences.

Several Israeli companies have been in the news lately for reportedly offering to carry out social media manipulation on behalf of the Trump campaign, but the panellists were silent on the topic of Israel's alleged home-grown fake-news industry.

Americans on the panel were less sanguine than the two Israelis

about the possible effects of fake news, and attempts to crack down on the phenomenon.

"When there is an opposing nation that has undertaken a covert campaign backed by the full resources of the state security services to undermine those institutions that are supposed to provide long-term resilience, you have to think if you're on the receiving end that this is a serious concern and merely taking it on the chin is not a good idea," said Michael Sulmeyer, the Director of Cyber Security Project at Harvard University's Belfer Center.

"If you're a state that is a victim of a concerted covert campaign, you have to figure out the best way to defend yourself," he said.

Another speaker, Ben Wizner, the Director of the Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project at the American Civil Liberties Union, called for serious regulation to rein in the world's top two advertising platforms, Google and Facebook.

"We are seeing the increasing

dominance of two advertising companies, Facebook and Google, as two choke points through which much of the world's news and information flow. If we are serious about addressing the harm of the constellation of problems we call fake news, we have to be serious about reducing the dominance of these platform monopolies," he said. "That would mean embracing a form of antitrust regulation that at least in the United States we have not seen in a generation."

Tabansky, of Tel Aviv University, described a Russian theory called "reflexive control theory" that he said was at the heart of Russia's information warfare efforts against foreign countries.

"The Russians believe that social systems have an algorithm for how they operate. Once you figure it out, you can introduce an input that causes the system to behave the way you want, but the system itself thinks it is behaving rationally."

## Tel Aviv University develops probes to pinpoint cancer cells

**SHOSHANNA SOLOMON**

Researchers at Tel Aviv University have developed smart nanoprobe that turn on a fluorescent light in the presence of cancerous cells, which they say "may dramatically improve" post-surgical outcomes for cancer patients.

The researchers created a so-called "smart probe" that, when injected into a patient a few hours before surgery to excise a primary tumour, might help surgeons pinpoint where the cancer is situated down to several cancer cells, allowing them to guarantee the removal of more cancer cells, with the least possible damage to surrounding healthy tissue, they said.

The interdisciplinary team behind the research was led by Professor Ronit Satchi-Fainaro, the Chairperson of the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at the university's Sackler Faculty of Medicine. The study was published in May in *Theranostics*.

In many kinds of cancers, it is often not the primary malignant tumour, but rather metastasis – the spread of lingering cancer cells to other parts of the body – that kills patients.

technology can guide the surgeon to completely excise the cancer."

The researchers based their work on previous studies, which show that cancerous cells have an increased number of enzymes called cysteine cathepsins, which are present in high numbers in a variety of tumours. Healthy cells have small quantities of these cathepsins.

"We exploited this property," of the increased number of cathepsins, "in order to design several turn-on probes, which can be activated to generate a fluorescence signal upon reaction with tumour cathepsins," the researchers said in their study.

The scientists first examined the effect of the probe in the lab on regular healthy skin and mammary tissue, and then on melanoma and breast-cancer cells. They subsequently used mouse models of melanoma and breast cancer to perform routine tumour excision surgeries and smart probe-guided surgeries.

"The mice that underwent regular surgery experienced recurrence and metastasis much sooner and more often than those who underwent our smart-probe-guided surgery," Satchi-Fainaro

said. "Most importantly, those that experienced the smart probe surgery survived much longer."

The life expectancy of the mice operated on without the probes was short. Only 40% of the mice in this group survived 120 days postoperatively, the university said. When the surgery was performed with the probes, the mice survival rate doubled: 80% remained healthy after 120 days. In other

words, 60% of the mice operated in the ordinary manner died from the disease, compared to only 20% of those who underwent an operation using the smart probes.

The team has registered a number of patents for development, and is talking to pharmaceutical companies about starting clinical trials.



Image-guided surgery using probes that light up in the presence of cancerous cells

"In cases of melanoma and breast cancer, for example, the surgeon may believe he has got everything – that he has excised the entire tumour and left the remaining tissue free of cancer. Even if only a few cells linger after surgery, too few or too small to be detected by MRI or CT, recurrence and metastasis may occur," Satchi-Fainaro says. "Our new

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## IDF rolls out anti-kidnap app to keep soldiers safe

**SHOSHANNA SOLOMON**

The 2014 kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers – Eyal Yifrach, Naftali Fraenkel, and Gilad Shaer – rocked the nation.

Recognising that they had been abducted by the people who picked them up at a hitchhiking post, one of the teens called the police and whispered, "We've been kidnapped." The call was transferred immediately to a senior officer, who continued to ask questions, but received no reply. The call lasted for 2:09 minutes, and was cut off. The officer called the number eight more times, but received three busy signals, and reached voicemail five times.

Apparently realising that a call had been made, the kidnapers shot the three teens dead point blank in the backseat of the car, military sources said.

The emergency did not prompt an alert by Israel's security forces. The senior officer did not pass on the information to her superiors or listen to the recording for further evidence, concluding that it was a prank call. Only about seven hours later did security forces realise there had been a kidnapping, and begin what became an 18-day search operation.

"After the kidnapping, the IDF came to the conclusion that there must be a way to respond to soldiers who are in distress," said Israel Defence Forces Major Itay Almog, the manager of the army's Distress Signal project, which was set up in 2016.

Last week, the army started rolling out a new app that does just that. All soldiers, whether in regular service or career officers, and civilians working for the army, will get text messages from the army, inviting

them to download a new app onto their smartphones that will allow them to alert authorities about emergency situations – terror attacks, kidnappings, natural disasters, or any other dire situation they are witness to.

"Within a minute, operational war rooms will know what is happening," Almog said. "Our target population is all our soldiers."



The aim is to improve the tactical response the IDF can give in a case of distress."

Almog said the app would begin to track the soldiers only once they had pressed the distress button, and its location-based function would be disabled by default so as to protect soldiers' privacy. Once activated, the phone would immediately alert three headquarters: the soldier's unit, a division closest to the soldier's geographical location, and the IDF's special operations room dedicated to providing rapid response in cases of emergency.

At the same time, the phones' video cameras would be triggered to show responders what was going on at the site. Users and responders would be able to connect via video, voice, and chat.

The app was developed by the Israeli firm NowForce, a maker of personal safety apps, based in the United States and Jerusalem.

The company's technology was adapted to the IDF's specifications, Almog said. The priorities were to preserve soldiers' privacy, and keep communications and IDF data secret.

# Jozi youth tell it like it is in portrait exhibition

NICOLA MILTZ

“Stop xenophobia. Stop crime. Stop raping. Stop taking drugs.” This statement is from Zama Khumalo, 15, of Joubert Park, one of 45 youths aged 15 to 23 photographed and interviewed by internationally renowned photographer Jodi Bieber for her latest exhibition titled #i.

Bieber spent two years documenting the desires, dreams, and hopes of Johannesburg youth for her exhibition which opened this Thursday at the Women’s Prison at Constitution Hill.

Each respondent who volunteered for #i was asked to answer a lengthy questionnaire; describe themselves in one word; and pose for a portrait at their home. Bieber used some of their own photographs from their cellphones to add texture to their narrative, inserting

their life, and creating their own story. Young people are often not heard and so, with elections coming up in 2019, this project is timely,” she said.

It has been a worthy endeavour to uncover what makes Jozi youth tick, said Bieber, who trekked to all corners of Johannesburg in search of willing participants. From Houghton and Victory Park to Berea and Freedom Park, she left no suburb unturned in her quest to document.

Bieber photographed Zama Khumalo, who was living in a one-bedroom flat in Joubert Park. The room had three double beds, all separated by a curtain. Khumalo described herself as “I am confident”. She pleaded: “Stop raping... it is confusing the child’s brain... the child will not be able to finish school because she inside is hurt (sic).”

Khumalo urges young women not to go for “sugar daddies

for money, to stop teenage pregnancy because it is killing us badly”.

Tshepang Dumelakgosi, 23, of Naturena described himself as: “I am intricate”.

“The future of this nation or the planet is ours,” he said. “This is something we need to protect at all costs. We can

only be able to do so through knowledge. This is where reading comes in... read more.”

Ravi Boaz Master, 15, of King David Victory Park, described himself as: “I am interesting”, and said he believed that “hair plays a large role in our identities”. Gender gaps and having to conform to gender stereotypes are issues that concern him. “It may sound childish, but I wake up in the morning, and I am proud of my hair, and I think that is something that should be respected and tolerated.”

Bieber’s niece, Jessica Anne Smerkowitz, 16, described herself as: “I am different”.

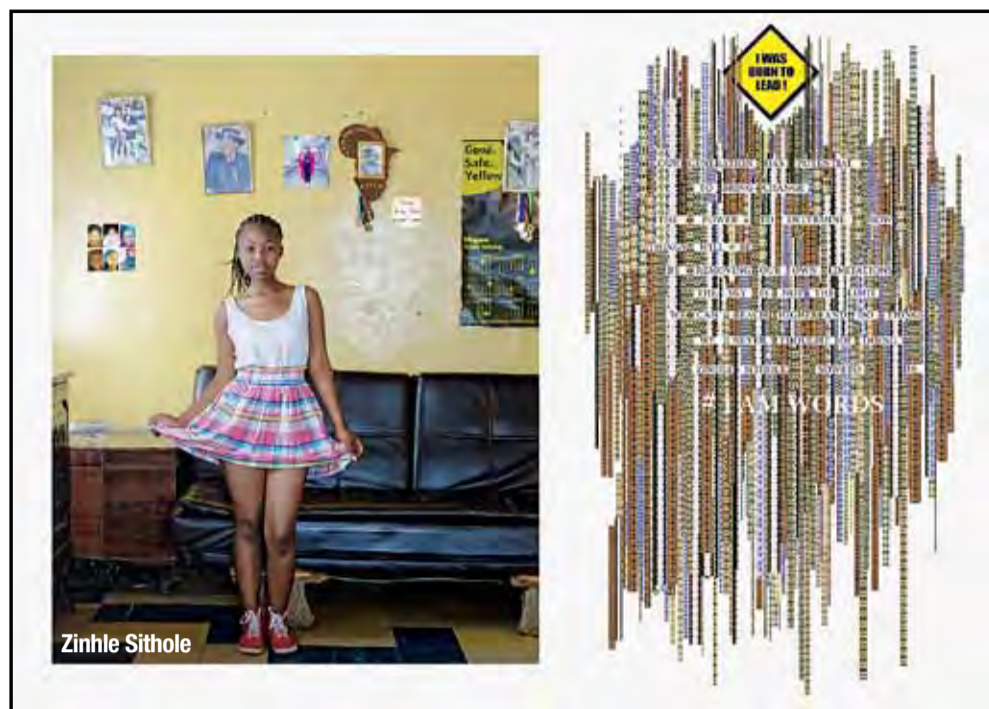
She said, “I want South Africa to find unity and peace, and for there to be no more conflict, racism and poverty, and with a president who can lead us to greatness.”

Ratang Mashilo, 19, described herself as: “I am unique”. She wants to live in a country that has good leaders who are “honest and have a great sense of integrity”. It concerns her that political parties are “motivated by one party trying to beat the other party”. Instead, she would like the focus to be on

“empowering communities”. As a finance student, her ambition is to “handle the country’s finances better, making sure that tax is redistributed equally”.

Zinhle Sithole, 16, of Soweto, said her generation “has the potential to bring change”.

She described herself as: “I am words”, saying that her generation has the “power to determine how things will be”. “By removing our own limitations, the sky is not the limit, we can reach higher and do things we never thought of doing,” she said.



Zinhle Sithole



Jessica Anne Smerkowitz

them carefully alongside her portraits.

The result is an exquisite visual dialogue, a portraiture project that showcases South African youth in all its intoxicating diversity and vulnerability.

What struck Bieber most during her two-year-long project, which she conceptualised in 2016, was the youths’ “intelligence” and worldliness. The project was then curated and designed by Brenton Maart.

“They are so switched on,” said Bieber of the many she came into contact with. Speaking from her Fairway apartment in Johannesburg, Bieber told the SA Jewish Report that she wanted to capture Jo’burg youth as it braced itself for the upcoming 2019 elections. She wanted to see where they found themselves, and what part they



felt they could play in the future of the country.

“This is a generation that did not grow up during apartheid,” she said. “They are a tech savvy, internet generation, and they use this to communicate with the global community.” She pointed out that they want to write their own story, a story free from the apartheid narrative defining their parents.

“They have their own story to tell, their own history to live and write,” she said.

“Their words echo fresh new conversations, a new way of being, of living

Bieber said #i was a public poster exhibition in which viewers were welcome to take home a poster of one of her photographs, creating “a future life of the artwork in order to spread the message”.

She has kept all the participants informed of developments over the two years through WhatsApp. They will each receive a poster of themselves, and an artist proof of their artwork.

Bieber’s professional career began after completing three short courses at the Market Photography Workshop in Johannesburg. Thereafter, she participated in a photographic training programme at The Star newspaper under the late Ken

Oosterbroek. She continued to work there in the period leading up to and during South Africa’s first democratic elections.

Bieber’s photograph of a young, mutilated Afghan woman featured on the cover of Time magazine in August 2010, winning her World Press Photo of the Year. She has won five other World Press Photo awards, among many other accolades. Her work is exhibited internationally in solo and group shows.

• The public art poster exhibition #i opened on Thursday 28 June at the Women’s Jail, Constitutional Hill, as part of the Basha Uhuru Freedom Festival Fired up by Nando’s. It runs until 8 July.

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- A short motivation for the nomination

# Suggested travel itinerary for Shashi Naidoo

SATIRE

Howard Sackstein has visited 75 countries around the world, and readily offers advice to all travellers in need. In this satirical piece, he offers travel advice to Shashi Naidoo, on behalf of BDS Travel.

Dear Shashi

Thank you for booking the BDS-supervised propaganda tour of Palestine. We are delighted that you have recovered from the battering and abuse our supporters have subjected you to. We are also thrilled you are now able to afford this propaganda tour despite the enormous financial harm we have done to you and your business as revenge for disagreeing with us.

Given the abuse, the threats of rape and murder you were subjected to, the official tour hashtag will be #MeToo.

We are sure that you now understand that freedom of speech is overrated, and it is best if you don't pack these Western ideals with you for the trip to Palestine. Please remember, we are generally Islamic fundamentalists, much like Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram, so bikinis are *haram* (forbidden). But the weather can be hot, so please bring a suicide vest, if you have one. Luckily, while in Palestine you will not be burdened by democracy, freedom of speech, or freedom of expression, just like all other Palestinian citizens, so pack light.

The standard propaganda tour will take place in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus; and Jerusalem, which we have now renamed Al Quds, to make sure there is no Jewish connection to the city. You would then be taken to the "apartheid wall" which stops us from bombing Israeli children in the nightclubs of Tel Aviv. Finally, you would see the glittering neon lights of the casinos of Jericho, where Israeli gambling losses fund our terror cells and suicide bomber stipends.

One of the additional highlights we can add to your itinerary is a tour of the street poles where we hang homosexuals in Gaza. Given that it is Pride month, it's a lovely colourful scene with many gays swinging in the wind.

On the same tour of Gaza, we can add in the beautifully picturesque buildings from whose roofs we throw the supporters of the Palestinian Authority's Fatah movement.

The architecture is stunning, and if you are lucky, you might even be able to see a mob execution silhouetted against the red glow of sunset across the Mediterranean.

These are wonderfully enthralling sights, full of ambiance and style. Don't forget to try the hummus and pita, another thing the Israelis stole from us.

If you have time, add a Hamas torture chamber. On Wednesdays, we can arrange a tour of a suicide bomb factory, or the place where we keep Israeli hostages for ransom.

An additional highlight of the Gaza tour is the launch sites from where we have fired 11 000 rockets at Israeli civilians. You can also view the kite manufacturing facilities where we make incendiary devices to send over the border to burn Israeli farms. There is a magnificent glow from the Israeli farms ablaze, it will go so well with your lovely complexion.

Please do not try cross the Gaza border into Egypt, as this border is closed due to our arming of the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt. The Egyptians can be so picky when it comes to Islamic fundamentalist insurgencies in their own country.

Due to the Palestinian Authority's failure to pay the salaries of public servants in Gaza,



Professor Farid Esack and Shashi Naidoo

we might be forced to cancel your tour of the Hamas terror tunnels which run under the international border fence into Israel. These tunnels are a wonderful way to see how well we spend international aid for Gaza.

As a special treat, we will take you into a Gaza school, where we teach children how Jews have no right to a homeland, and how we will drive them into the sea when we conquer the land. "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." It's a lovely song. You can download this traditional Palestinian melody off iTunes.

When returning to the West Bank from Gaza, please remember to condemn Hamas to the Palestinian Authority, or you could land up in jail in Ramallah.

While in Ramallah, our capital, we could arrange an excursion for you to the gravesite of Yasser Arafat, one of the few world leaders to steal more money than the Guptas and Jacob Zuma combined. Unfortunately, the Arafat family are unable to meet you due to the strenuous commitments of their luxury-plundered lifestyle in Paris.

Please do not ask Palestinian Authority leaders where Jews are allowed to live in their country. They have already made it abundantly clear that no Jews are allowed to own land or live in Palestine. It worked well in Germany during World War II, and it can work for us. This is not apartheid. Repeat, this is not apartheid.

If you are lucky enough to meet our President, Mahmoud Abbas, please ask him to repeat the delightful theory about how Jews exaggerated the Holocaust. He will also tell you how the entire connection between Jews and Israel is fabricated. Although much of the civilised world has condemned our President for these remarks, we believe that an evening of traditional Palestinian story-telling is a must.

We kindly suggest that you don't mention elections or democracy while on this

propaganda mission because some things are best left unsaid.

We last voted in 2005, and that was more than enough democracy for us. We didn't like the results of that election, so Hamas murdered many of the Palestinian Authority's officials in Gaza thereafter.

As we oppose the rights of Jews to a homeland, we kindly request that you do not ask for any of the following side trips: A visit to southern Israel, where kids live in bomb shelters under the constant threat of Palestinian rocket fire; a visit to the victims of Palestinian terror; or try to get an understanding of why the Palestinians keep on rejecting offers for an independent homeland despite repeatedly requesting one.

Being in Palestine can be fun and exciting. Pick up a stone and throw it while you are there, its great exercise. We already know that Gaza is not a sh\*thole because we specifically targeted you for saying that. So expect Louis Vuitton luxury.

We know that you will have a wonderful stay, and we know that we will long abuse you as our poster child role model. That's how we target and destroy any person who disagrees with us. You will be a wonderful tourist and tool for us. We are so happy that you chose our propaganda tour of Palestine.

For future reference: We also promote entertaining tours of Iran, where you can witness how the Islamic fundamentalist regime brutally crushed the green revolution while sipping non-alcoholic cocktails on the veranda of your hotel. And, we can take you to Syria, where we do a sound and light show on the graves of the 250 000 Syrians murdered by the Assad regime. We hope you choose one of these options for your next tour with us.

Yours sincerely  
BDS Travel

## Consider it an excellent job

REVIEW

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

Let's face it, directing primary school kids in a play is a mammoth task, but King David Victory Park Primary School's production of *Oliver* was astonishingly good. The singing, acting, and choreography was slick and professional right down to the smallest singing roles, which ironically showed the most promising talent.

Even the sets and lighting were of high quality, evoking the Victorian London Charles Dickens wrote about so well in the novel *Oliver Twist*, on which the play is based.

*Oliver* has delightful music, but the show was stolen by "Consider yourself" by Fagin's gang, a well-rehearsed and spirited group, who even got their Cockney accents right.

A special shout out to Head of Music, Andrew Edgar, who did a marvelous rendition of Fagin, including "You've got to pick a pocket or two" and "Reviewing the situation". He was also responsible for directing and co-ordinating the production.

*Oliver* is a unique production, not just for its sublime music, but the way it combines

short and long solos and crowd scenes, allowing the entire school to get involved.

The fast-paced action took place both on and off stage, and the children delivered it beautifully. The group songs were well harmonised – "Who will buy?" is worthy of mention here. And the crowd scenes were beautifully choreographed right down to the bows at the end of the production.

*Oliver* wasn't just enjoyable for the parents of the children in the play, it was a wonderful production on its own merit.

Fagin's gang steal the show



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# David Goldblatt's compassion for the ordinary is his legacy

ROBYN SASSEN

There were different parts to internationally acclaimed veteran photographer, David Goldblatt, who passed away this week. So said Rabbi Mendel Rabinowitz, at Goldblatt's funeral, in a beautiful tribute.

Goldblatt was not only a great photographer, he was a man of compassion and principle. He loved few but deeply, he spoke little, but said much. His photographs were beguilingly simple, but spoke volumes. Goldblatt passed away on 25 June 2018, after a battle with cancer. He was 87.

Rabbi Rabinowitz described Goldblatt as someone who loved growing people. He alluded to how Goldblatt so generously gave of his time to young photographers, establishing the Photo Lab at the Market Theatre in 1989, which opened real doors to myriads of professionals in the industry.

Goldblatt had deep concern for social issues and a profound love for South Africa. Rabbi Rabinowitz deemed Goldblatt a tzaddik, because of this. "Life and death," he said, "reflect a person's contribution to society. He who has given a lot can never die."

Indeed, Goldblatt was the man who gave a voice to ordinary people in South Africa, those who travelled for hours in public transport, worked in ignominious circumstances, and earned a pittance. He was not afraid to go down mine shafts to document the circumstances there, or to look white Afrikaners in the eye, and with empathy, during the thick of apartheid. Indeed, he was not afraid to voice his opinions, and turn down honours offered by structures he deemed corrupt.

The first South African photographer to host a solo exhibition at the prestigious Museum of Modern Art in New York, in 1998, Goldblatt was born in the small mining town of Randfontein on 29 November 1930, to people who had fled Lithuania. He was subject from the get-go to the hatreds of the time and place: As a white person, he was a part of the privileged few. As he was a Jew, he was hated.

The plan was clear: He, the youngest of three boys, would take over his father's general store when he came of age. To that end, he was sent to university part time to study commerce. But David had his own dreams. When apartheid

was legislated in 1948, he was 18. The field of photojournalism was just beginning; it took him more than a decade to establish himself professionally.

The master of deadpan photography, Goldblatt was a careful craftsman who had his own opinions about what mattered. He freelanced for a range of publications from 1963, including *Tatler Magazine*. He published his first anthology of images, *On the Mines*, in 1973.

Goldblatt received a great deal of international acknowledgement as an artist and as an individual, including the Jewish Achiever Award for the Arts in 2013. Without being a card-carrying anti-apartheid activist, Goldblatt made pictures that never vicariously pry into people's lives. Rather than instances of conflagration, Goldblatt's are moments of normalcy, which are often more telling.

Controversy sometimes touched Goldblatt. In 1985, the ANC called for a boycott of an exhibition of his that was touring Britain. This was based on the mistaken belief that he had defied the country's cultural boycott. It took Afrapix founder Omar Badsha and Nobel Laureate Nadine Gordimer to put matters right. In 2011, he was selected to receive the South African government's award of the Order of Ikhamanga (Silver). After careful consideration, he turned it down in protest against the so-called "Secrecy Bill". In 2013, the inflammatory work of painter Ayanda Mabulu was censored by the Jo'burg Art Fair as its management felt Mabulu's rude representation of then President Jacob Zuma would affect its financial success. In solidarity with Mabulu, Goldblatt removed his own work from the Fair.

Buried in the section of the cemetery reserved for those who have contributed significantly to South African society, Goldblatt was laid to rest in the presence of some of the biggest names in art, photography, and the media. From renowned artists William Kentridge and Sam Nhlengethwa to veteran photographers Paul Weinberg, Zanele Muholi, Suzy Bernstein, Cedric Nunn and Peter Magubane, mourners

David Goldblatt



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

included television producer Harriet Gavshon and journalism gurus Anton Harber and Irwin Manoim, to name but a few. Black and white, old and young, straight and LGBTI, Muslim and Jew joined hands and hearts in their celebration of a generous, immensely modest man.

Goldblatt's focused loyalty to the demands of his craft put him in a different league to the average octogenarian. After his retrospective earlier this year at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, he continued working until shortly before his death. His legacy of work forced South Africans to look at themselves and their world with empathy and wryness. He leaves his wife, Lily; three children: Steven who lives in England, Brenda and Rasada; and two grandsons: Sam and Daniel.

## Don't blow out the tefillin

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan at his 60th birthday celebration



HOWARD SACKSTEIN

What do you give the Rabbi who has everything? That was the dilemma faced by the Hazdan family on the eve of Rabbi Dovid Hazdan's 60th birthday. "We sat down as a family," says Rebbetzin Feige Hazdan, "and wanted to do something deeply meaningful for him. Dovid has always been so inspired by the Rebbe's commitment to tefillin. Tefillin are the bond between an ordinary Jew and Ha'shem".

On the suggestion of the three Hazdan children, the idea of 60 people putting on tefillin for Rabbi Hazdan's 60th birthday was born. "We called it 60 for 60," says Feige. "What was so amazing is that the majority of these people don't often put on tefillin – some never do."

But then, the 60 for 60 project snowballed and it soon grew to more than 120 people, including Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, who all arrived at a surprise Shacharit minyan, to honour Rabbi Hazdan with the gift of the mitzvah of tefillin for his birthday.

When Rabbi Hazdan arrived for morning prayers, he was met by Steven Brasg who asked him to look at an issue in the shul

hall. Hazdan feared a disaster, but instead he stood stupefied, facing a group of more than 120 tallit and tefillin clad congregants singing "Happy birthday" to their Rov.

Banker Marc Green says: "I joined in because of the thoughtfulness behind the gift. I wanted to give back to a wonderful man who is always on the giving end."

People like journalist Herby Opland are not regular shul goers. "Dovid Hazdan is a mensch of the highest order. His radiance is mirrored by each member of his beautiful family. I feel privileged to be considered his friend, and to have been asked to share in his celebration", says Opland.

The Chairperson of the Great Park Shul, Clive Blechman, was on hand to embrace the Rabbi upon his arrival. He said: "I have been associated with the rabbi for more than 20 years, the past 15 as Chairperson. What a privilege to be able to work with him, and to honour him on his 60th birthday, not with a party, but with something much more meaningful".

Says Opland, "Sixty is recognised as an age reflecting wisdom. In Dovid's case, he was old with wisdom long before his time."

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# A legacy for life – and leaving it

TALI FEINBERG

“Rohan was in unbearable pain. He was screaming. It was 02:00 or 03:00, and I was running around Red Cross Children’s Hospital trying to get someone to help him. But there was only one doctor on duty for the whole hospital, and the doctor wasn’t available at that time,” remembers Rodney Bloom, whose son Rohan passed away from cancer two years ago, at the age of 14.

It was this moment that made Bloom realise that terminally ill children needed a hospice with specialised care to support them and their families through the horrendous end-of-life scenarios that no one should have to endure.

“I slept on a fold-out couch in the hospital for a year and a half. There are no beds for parents. They are doing their best, but resources are so limited,” says Bloom.

Another moment that stands out is when Rohan was bleeding from his nose and mouth, and he began to fight with the nurse who was treating him. “At this stage,

he was an angry adolescent who had become a paraplegic due to the cancer spreading throughout his body. He didn’t want to be a cancer warrior, he just wanted to be a normal teenage boy, going on dates, and playing sport. He had huge plans. By the end of that incident, the nurse, Rohan and I were all covered in blood,” remembers

Bloom.

It was not always like this. Rohan was a talented sportsman with the world at his feet. He grew up in Cape Town, attended Herzlia School, and Habonim camp, and had just been accepted into the prestigious boys’ school, Bishops, to complete his senior schooling.

“Everyone depended on him.

If the cricket team wasn’t winning, everyone would say, ‘Don’t worry, Rohan still has to bat’,” says his father. With an easy swagger, a natural charm, and the all-round assets of a golden boy, Rohan Bloom was destined for great things.

So, when he noticed a sharp pain in his left rib after a cricket game in July 2014, he put it down to sports injuries. After all, he had just been made captain of the provincial cricket team, and that was on top of the waterpolo, rugby, and karate that filled his schedule. But after numerous tests, he was diagnosed with an extremely rare case of Ewing’s sarcoma, a deadly cancer that begins in the bones and is prevalent in adolescents.

After a gruelling fight, complicated by the fact that he

was born with only one kidney, Rohan went into remission. Soon thereafter, still frail from his ordeal, he was picked for his new school’s cricket team. “It was both the happiest and saddest time of his life when, while on tour with his team in October that year, the pain returned,” says Bloom.

The cancer had come back, and it spread throughout his body. His family – including mom Kim and younger siblings Kieran and Carys – were told that Rohan was now terminal. Nothing more could be done to save him. “We never actually told him the cancer had spread so extensively,” says his father. “We wanted him to fight. Even though I wasn’t naïve, I told his doctor, ‘Watch, Rohan is going to beat this. He doesn’t know how

Bloom. Most terminally ill children die at home – be it in a shack or in a house – or in hospital, right alongside children who are fighting to live.

The hospice Bloom envisions, named Rohan House in his son’s memory, will be different. It will offer the best services in every sphere to a terminally ill child and their family. “The fact that we don’t have such a facility in 2018 is mind-boggling,” says Dr Michelle Meiring, the Chief Executive of Paedspal, a non-profit organisation that provides integral services to paediatric patients suffering from incurable illnesses. The organisation will play a major role in making Rohan House a reality.

For 14 years – the duration of Rohan’s life – Meiring has been trying to make such a facility



Photos: Rodney Bloom

Rohan Bloom

## Award-winning author documents American’s ideological U-turn in Israel

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Did you know that as many as 60 000 American Jews have settled at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – the territories occupied by Israel since the Six-Day War?

Sara Yael Hirschhorn documents this in her book, *City on a Hilltop: American Jews and the Israeli Settler Movement*, which won the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature Choice Award this month. This prestigious annual Jewish book award is under the auspices of the Jewish Book Council (based in the US).

Hirschhorn was in South Africa recently to launch her book at the Jacob Gitlin Library, in association with the Jewish Literary Festival in Cape Town last weekend.

Hirschhorn, 37, hails from Springfield, Massachusetts. She is the University Research Lecturer in Israel Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies and Sidney Brichto Fellow, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, at the University of Oxford.

The story behind her book begins in 1967 in the US, with “young, highly-educated, upwardly mobile individuals, aligned to the left-wing social movements of their day”, namely, the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam protests. “They were not right-wing conservatives,” Hirschhorn stressed, “yet they made the ideological journey from the policies of the left in the US to the right in Israel”.

“They turned their struggle for African-American civil rights into their own struggle for Jewish civil rights.”

Hirschhorn says that the rise of ethnic consciousness in the 1960s allowed Jews to feel that “Jewishness” was “beautiful” after the 1967 war. “It allowed Americans to identify as Jewish-American for the first time, to assert their pride and engage with their own ethnicity in the occupied territories.”

When the “new left” turned against Israel, Jewish American activists faced a dilemma. Feeling that they were no longer part of American political culture, they turned their energies to striving in Israel and the settler enterprise, she maintains.

There was “very limited” settlement in the occupied territories between 1967 and 1973, but after that, settlements “really took off”, she said. Today Americans comprise 15% of the total settler population.

In the book, Hirschhorn profiles three communities

established by and for American-Israeli settlers, namely Yamit in the Sinai, and Efrat and Tekoa in the West Bank. Some of Efrat’s first settlers were South Africans and many live there today.

She examines what she says appears to us as “cognitive dissonance”. This is the clash of liberal values brought from the US and the realities of living in the Occupied Territories. It is also the clash between their Jewish American liberal personas and their project.

“Sadly, one route has been settler terrorism,” she commented, mentioning the case of Baruch Goldstein, an American-Israeli physician who perpetrated the 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs massacre in Hebron.

The book challenges the popular view that settlers are motivated by messianic ideals. It also examines how liberalism and political Zionism compete. In Hirschhorn’s words, “Practising human rights at home and imperialism abroad.”

Asked about a possible economic motivation for settling in the occupied territories in that they provide a cheaper, better quality of life than is affordable elsewhere, she said: “American settlers are highly ideological.

“A very small percentage move to the occupied territories because they seek advantages that they don’t have in places like Manhattan.”

Hirschhorn’s next book is a comparative case study of post-1967 South African Zionism and Diaspora-Israel relations.



Dr Sara Yael Hirschhorn



Rodney and Rohan Bloom at his Barmitzvah, shortly before Rohan was diagnosed with cancer

to lose’.

Yet, after enduring indescribable pain and indignity, confusion, and paralysis, Rohan slipped into a coma. Three days later, on 15 April 2016, he passed away.

The golden boy left behind a shattered family, blown apart by the bomb blast of illness, indignity and agony – but he also left a legacy. “I always knew Rohan’s name would be up in lights, I just never pictured

**The hospice Bloom envisions, named Rohan House in his son’s memory, will be different. It will offer the best services in every sphere to a terminally ill child and their family.**

it like this,” says Bloom. He is consumed by the wish that no other child should endure such horror in his last days. So, he began The Rohan Bloom Foundation, and its first major project is to build a specialised paediatric hospice in Cape Town.

At present, there is no specialised private children’s hospice in South Africa, says

happen. “I’ve seen children dying in terrible circumstances,” she says. “That’s why Rohan House will be accessible to all. There will be round-the-clock palliative care, accommodation for parents, art, music and play therapy, and respite care to give families a break.”

When Bloom and Dr Meiring found the perfect house for the hospice, generous donors from the Jewish community helped them to buy it. There will be many more opportunities to assist, from sponsoring a brick, to a room, to a bed for up to R25 000, the monthly cost of care at the hospice. The sponsor will be able to directly assist a specific child, and follow their journey.

In the words of Mattie Stepanek, a child who died from a life limiting neuromuscular illness, Rohan House will be guided by the principle that “Palliative care no longer means helping children die well, it means helping children and their families to live well and then, when the time is certain, to help them die gently.”

• To learn more, like *The Rohan Bloom Foundation* page on Facebook, or contact Dr Michelle Meiring on [drmeiring@gmail.com](mailto:drmeiring@gmail.com).

# Once vibrant Rosettenville Shul breathes its last

JORDAN MOSHE

The Rosettenville Shul is just a shell of what it used to be. Once a thriving shul and community, this beautiful 88-year-old shul now sits empty, having had its last service on Rosh Chodesh Iyar (Sunday 15 April).

The rich heritage of the 110-year-old Johannesburg South Jewish community is in danger of being lost and its vibrant past forgotten as the community has moved elsewhere. There is no choice but to close the shul permanently and sell it, bringing an era to an end.

"My father's name appears here alongside others who made this shul a reality," says the shul's last Chairperson Dr Ben Krengel, 85, pointing to a marble slab affixed to the wall in the foyer of the shul.

"When this building is sold, it will probably be demolished along with the wall to which it is attached. It is sad, but who will want to preserve it? It's too much work."

Recounting the history of the shul and its once vibrant community, Krengel and his wife Felicia remember the halcyon days of Johannesburg South with fondness. "There was a time when every seat in this place was occupied," says Krengel. "There weren't enough seats here over *Yamim Noraim*. We brought chairs in and placed them in every space we could find. I remember sitting on the



Dr Ben Krengel inside the shul

steps at the door one year when there simply was no room."

Born to parents married in the shul itself, Krengel has been a proud member of the community since his birth. The shul's origins can be traced even further back, however, as he explained. "There were only a few families in the southern suburbs at the beginning of the [previous] century."

"There was a house here where the shul stands, and services for minor festivals and shabbat were held here. The services of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were held in the Masonic Hall in Kenilworth, and though it was not ideal, it made the most sense."

For this reason, when Louis Joseph Broomberg offered to sell a small hall he owned in La Rochelle for 200 pounds, a drive for funds was launched immediately. Shortly thereafter, the La Rochelle-Rosettenville community officially came into existence with Broomberg as its first Chairperson. Its first service took place over Rosh Hashanah in 1908. "Although two men from town were still needed to complete the minyan," says Krengel, "it was an occasion of note, because it all officially began then."

Until that point, no Torah learning nor Hebrew lessons were offered to the community's youth, who had to cycle into town to attend lessons. A few years later, a Mr Hurwitz was appointed as the first Hebrew teacher and minister of the community, and after his departure five years later, Rev. Lipkin arrived from Booyens.

It was after the arrival of his successor, a young man from Lithuania by the name of Kaplan, that Krengel was born. "Kaplan was one of my teachers," recalls Krengel. "I remember him teaching me the *aleph bet*. He was sent a wife from Lithuania who he had never met, and he became our chazzan and rabbi. It was him who told me I'd get a matric and become a doctor one day, and who left me his microscopes when he left the community. I went on to use them in my career as a doctor, just as he had predicted."

In 1928, the southern suburbs were struck by a tornado, and the house which stood at the current site of the shul was completely demolished. "If it weren't for that tornado," laughs Krengel, "we would probably never have had a shul."

"The house was completely blown away, and its owner, Mr Weiss, had no intention of repairing it. He offered the site to the community for 450 pounds, and it

was accepted immediately." The hall in La Rochelle was sold, a committee established to raise the necessary funds, and the shul became a reality. The building was completed and dedicated in 1930, and in 1949, it was decided that its name would change from the La Rochelle-Rosettenville Shul to the South-Eastern Hebrew Congregation.

Recalling those first years of the shul's existence, Krengel remembers a collection of committed individuals, special services, and a sense of true community. From inspirational talks over Sukkot, lively shul parties, to the involvement of Bnei Akiva shlichim from overseas, the shul



Photos: Jordan Moshe

The Rosettenville Shul

offered its congregants many special opportunities to be inspired and involved.

"I sang in our shul choir with my friend, Morris Kretzer," says Krengel, "but I don't know if singing is the word for what we did. We weren't trained very well, and we ended up shouting more than anything. After doing so for a few minutes during a service, people rushed up to us and asked us if we would kindly stop. We did, and it was probably better that way."

Krengel recalls how committed people were to the shul, and how they all strove to do whatever they could to ensure that it thrived. "The late Joe Joffe supported the community greatly in his day. He was a dedicated leader and a great man. He offered his home to us for services at night



Inside the Rosettenville Shul

when walking was risky and not possible. The day before he died, Joe, who was confined to his bed, told us that if we needed a man to complete our minyan, we should wrap him in a blanket and carry him from his home to the shul. He passed away the next

day, but I will always remember how dedicated he was to what we had."

Krengel says his most cherished memory is the celebration of his Barmitzvah. "I celebrated my Barmitzvah right here," he says proudly. "Every Barmitzvah party was held in the Coronation Hall, but I was determined to be different, and wanted to have my party in the South Kenilworth Hall. I was becoming a man, and the Coronation Hall was too ordinary, too mundane for such a special occasion. I told Kaplan what I wanted, he took my side, and pleaded my case to my parents. They relented, and we had a great time," he laughs.

"I can still see the crowds of women who used to descend from the galleries upstairs after a service," he says. "The hall was full of people, and there was no space to move. The community was vibrant, devoted and special. We had lovely times here."

Sadly, the once strong community dwindled as people began to move elsewhere and the Jews of the southern suburbs headed north. Although this happened before his term as Chairperson began ten years ago, Krengel says that the past five years were particularly difficult. "This was a community which once hosted dances in its hall, celebrated Barmitzvahs regularly, and had a strong membership," he says. "With the decline of the south, we lost people to Israel and other parts of Johannesburg."

Krengel and his wife are in the process of moving to Norwood, but

they stress how much the community and shul have meant to both of them. "I wish I could have handed over the position to someone after me, but I know it's not reasonable to persist in light of reality. Things have changed, and even we've had to move. This is the sensible thing to do," Krengel says.

"Today, I can count on one hand the people who still live here," he says. "This once was a very close community, especially during the war. We felt a strong sense of connection with Jews around the world, and knew full well what was happening to them in Europe. I remember one afternoon, cheder was cancelled, and the rabbis convened to daven for our brothers in Europe that they should be saved."

Says Felicia, "The services we had here were the most sincere and beautiful I've ever experienced. I was heartbroken when we were struggling for members in later years. Most of the minyan we had here for *Yamim Noraim* slept in our home, and we were grateful to them for helping us. I will always be happy that we lived here, and that we were part of something so unique. I wish we could find new members, but this is the way of life."

Despite the sadness they expressed, both remain positive, and will continue to cherish the memories they amassed over time. "The shul was certainly special to us," says Krengel, "but we must embrace the future and move forward. If anything, our past gives us the strength we need to press on. We must all have courage in times that are difficult for the Jewish people, and make the most of what we have. If we have faith, we can still succeed, no matter what."

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# The man who welcomed Prince William to Israel with tea and scones

NICOLA MILTZ AND  
JULIE LEIBOWITZ

Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, was welcomed to the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on Tuesday by a former South African, Sheldon Ritz, who is Director of Operations at the famous hotel, and a highly experienced manager of diplomatic entourages.

On his three-day visit, the prince was housed in one of the three suites on the top floor, which all face the Old City. Security was tight, Ritz says, pointing out that the King David is “the most secure” hotel in Israel, with bullet, bomb and poisonous gas-proof suites.

Prince William’s delegation, which arrived in advance at the weekend, comprised aides and assistants plus security. It wasn’t a large delegation, more comparable to the visit of a European Prime Minister, Ritz says. It was on a much smaller scale than the visit of United States President Donald Trump in May, whose entourage took over the entire hotel. Trump’s visit caused chaos, because reserved guests – including prominent South Africans – had to be relocated to other hotels at very short notice.

Ritz says he hopes the prince enjoyed some Middle Eastern food like hummus, falafel, shawarma – typical Israeli stuff – because he heard he likes to try local delicacies. “We cater for people from all over the world. For example, for Chinese visitors, we do sticky rice for breakfast, so we brought him some very good tea from England, the best we could buy, and we didn’t forget the milk!” he says.

On the prince’s arrival, the hotel staff made scones, with clotted cream and strawberry jam. They heard there was a debate in England about whether to put the cream or jam on first, so they left them both on the side, and let the Prince decide.

Ritz says he was invited to the British Embassy a few weeks prior to the visit for training in the correct protocol for dealing with royalty. He was told that the first time you meet the prince, you should say, “Welcome, Your Royal Highness”. Thereafter, you can call him “Sir”.

“We were told that you shouldn’t put your hand out to welcome him. You have to let him initiate the handshake,” he says. “I went up with him in the elevator to his suite and explained how everything works,

because it’s pretty high-tech. I was with him for about ten minutes, and was told that I shouldn’t initiate conversation while doing so.

“It’s a little peculiar to ask Israelis not to initiate conversation, but I’m from South Africa, part of the Commonwealth, so I’m OK with holding my tongue and not speaking unless spoken to.

“It’s not often that we have royalty in Israel because we’re not a monarchy, and the visit is very historic, so it was very exciting.

“Prince William is so well-liked, it’s unbelievable,” Ritz says, pointing out that the hotel was honoured to have him as a guest for the entire time he was in the region.

“The media attention was huge, just like when President Trump came in May,” Ritz says, “but we didn’t have to bring in extra staff for the prince because it was a different operation. His delegation took only about 50 rooms, whereas Trump’s took 1 100 rooms, including all 230 rooms at the King David Hotel plus rooms in another 19 hotels. Journalists stayed at the King David’s sister hotel, the Dan Panorama, because they couldn’t be in the same hotel as the prince.

“We have had a lot of experience hosting important people, such as Presidents Bush, Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel, Tony Blair, King Hussein of Jordan, and of course Prince Charles, who stayed twice, but this is definitely up there,” Ritz says. “It’s unique. I mean, who doesn’t know Prince William?”

Ritz, who has been at the King David for 17 years, has much experience in dealing with diplomats and celebrities. It’s never ever a dull moment for the Durbanite, who made aliya in 1992 at the age of 26.

Requests from leading dignitaries and international celebrities have ranged from the bizarre to the mundane.

“A few months ago, the Prime Minister of Russia requested a ton of pork for his meals. Being a kosher establishment, we could not meet this requirement. However, he took his meals at another premises off-site. It does get tricky when guests ask for eggs and bacon in the morning. We don’t like to say no.”

The hotel once had to make special little steps so that Barbra Streisand’s pooch could climb onto her king-size bed.

And, he remembers when Jean-Claude van Damme requested a special contraption that would allow

him to bungee jump off the balcony for a scene in one of his movies.

One guest demanded a specially built mosquito net, afraid that he would contract malaria, while former French President Nicolas Sarkozy insisted on chocolate made with 90% cocoa, which had to be imported.

US diplomat Condoleezza Rice, who has visited the hotel on numerous occasions, prefers Diet Pepsi over the locally available Pepsi Max, so bottles have to be brought in specially for her visits, which Ritz stores for her in his office.

During his studies at the ML Sultan Hotel School in Durban, Ritz never thought that one day he would be shaking hands – literally – with the world’s most famous people and attending to their every possible whim and wish.

It is certainly not a job for the fainthearted.

“The Foreign Minister of Denmark arrived at 01:30, and I was there to meet him,” says Ritz, who often sleeps in his office on a mattress on the floor and showers at the hotel gym.

He remembers with discomfort having to assuage more than 100 guests whose check-in plans clashed with the departure arrangements of former US President Barack Obama as Jerusalem experienced heavy winds and a sand storm, creating havoc.

“That was

erev

Pesach. Our guests had to wait for at least two hours for Air Force One to be out of Israeli airspace before I could allow them to check in, and that was well past 21:00,” says Ritz.

But it’s all in a day’s work for the busy, yet highly competent Ritz, who says he loves his job although it can be “quite tiring”. Fortunately, his wife and two children understand the demands of his job.

• Additional reporting from Times of Israel



Sheldon Ritz

## British Royals have Jewish ancestors

OPINION

Colin Brian Jantjies

When more than 11 million television viewers watched the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, commentators remarked that the mixed marriage was a first for British royalty. This is not true.

King George III’s wife, Queen Charlotte, who he married in 1761, was black. They had 15 children. Queen Elizabeth II is a great, great, great grandchild of theirs.

The House of Windsor, regardless of its pale complexions, blushing cheeks, and rosy lips, was built on mixed marriage. The Queen Mum and Queen Elizabeth have casually commented on their black ancestors.

The first recorded mixed marriage occurred in Africa (Egypt) between Joseph, the Hebrew, and Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian high priest (Genesis 41: 46). The match-maker was Pharaoh.

Moses also took a black wife, Zipporah, a Midianite. Miriam was furious. Moses felt hurt, and G-d was livid. His anger against Miriam (which nearly cost her life) taught the Israelites a vital lesson. Colour was not an issue, only faith and belief.

Mixed marriages happened soon after the arrival of the Hebrews in Canaan. Judah married the Canaanite Shuah (Genesis 38: 2). They had three sons. Thereafter, Judah had a relationship with his Canaanite daughter-in-law, Tamar, who produced twins, Perez and Zera (Genesis 38: 1-30; 1 Chronicles 2: 4). The Book of Ruth describes her marriage to Boaz. She was a Moabite. He was a Jewish prince born of a Canaanite mother, Rahab (Joshua 2: 1; 3; 6: 17-25). Their son was Obed. Obed’s

son Jesse was King David’s father (Ruth 4: 13-22). David married a Canaanite woman, Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11: 3; 23: 34). Their son became King Solomon. Judges 3: 5-6 informs us that the Israelites didn’t shy away from mixed marriages.

The story of Joseph, the son of Rachel and favourite of Jacob, is pivotal to Israelite tribal history. Besides the patriarchs, only Joseph, Moses, and David play monumental roles: Joseph as head of the House of Israel, Moses as the law-giver, and David as the king of Israel.

Joseph’s marriage was an immense affair. For his remarkable ability to interpret dreams and for his admirable moral character, Pharaoh gave Joseph the title and rank of Prime Minister. By marrying into Egyptian society, Joseph’s Hebrew family (Jacob, his 11 brothers, their wives and children) officially became members of the most powerful royal house in the world.

Thus, in an age before the rise of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, the Hebrews were royalty. Ironically, the new Pharaoh who enslaved them was an Assyrian (Isaiah 52: 4). The Assyrians or Hyksos, as they were then called, are the ancestors of the Germans.

Joseph had two sons, Manasse and Ephraim. Jacob, his father, claimed them for himself. Jacob conferred on Ephraim the blessings of the first-born. Not only did Jacob elevate the sons of Joseph above their brethren, but he also transferred his name upon them. Henceforth, they would be called the House of Israel. Joseph’s descendants, after their Assyrian exile in 720-22 BCE, would dominate the world.

The House of Israel become the founders of Europe. The Ten Lost Tribes, believed to include Denmark, Sweden, Scandinavia, France, Holland, Britain, all fulfilled the prophecies of Jacob’s blessings. As the greatest empire the world had ever seen, Ephraim’s (Britain) mixed descendants now number in the billions (Genesis 22: 17). According to Irish, Scottish and English history, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasse settled in Britain. This is referred to

in Jeremiah 31: 10.

King Zedekiah died in Babylon. His sons were killed in Judea. History records that Zedekiah was the last of the Jewish kings. Yet G-d had promised David an everlasting line of kings (2 Samuel 7: 16; Genesis 89: 10; Psalm 89: 3-4; 29-37). Did G-d err?

King Zedekiah had two daughters. The Jewish princesses were spirited away (Jeremiah 43: 6). Jeremiah became their mentor. The question is: what happened to them? Where did they go? From Britain and Ireland, we learn a remarkable tale. One of daughters, Tea-Tephi, married a descendant of Joseph. Through this union the House of Judah and the House of Israel were reunited. Joseph’s descendants were never referred to as Jews by their Israelite brethren. Yet today British royalty is not only colourfully mixed but of Jewish heritage.

Astonishingly, England believes it is the House of Israel. The tribe of Ephraim. The first-born of G-d (Exodus 4: 22; Jeremiah 31: 9). Its bloodline stretches back before the coronation of King David to the Egyptian Royal House, thus making it the oldest living dynasty in the world. Britain’s Jewish roots are still in place. The Israeli Embassy in London is on crown land. It was Britain who created the new Jewish state. The Queen’s sons and male heirs are circumcised by a mohel. A Rabbi dutifully visits the family every erev Shabbat.

The Song of Solomon, an interracial love story, chosen for Harry and Meghan’s wedding was in fact the Queen’s suggestion. This begs the question: when is British royalty going to tell the world who they really are? And how would the Jewish world react to this news? Oy gevalt!

• Colin Brian Jantjies is a member of the Lemba tribe and has a Masters degree in Israelite Studies from Stellenbosch University. He is a senior lecturer in Cultural and Media Studies and a Torah scholar, with interest in Biblical Interpretation and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.



Prince William and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

# The connection between the British royals and the Jews

JORDAN MOSHE

With Prince William's historic visit to Israel this week, all eyes have been trained on the Jewish capital. It may have taken 70 years, but the first official visit by a member of the British Royal family began in Israel on Monday, when William, the Duke of Cambridge, arrived in Tel Aviv.

There are interesting connections between the Jewish people and Britain's royals – some more bizarre than others.

Charles was reportedly circumcised by Rabbi Jacob Snowman in 1948, at the time the leading mohel in London, and the circumciser to the royal family. It is not clear whether his sons have been circumcised, or why it was supposedly done. However, it has been argued that this is a custom dating back to George I, who brought it over from his native Hanover.

Prince Charles' father, Phillip, also has an

important Jewish connection. His mother, Princess Alice of Battenberg was recognised in 1994 by Yad Vashem as a righteous gentile for saving a Jewish family in war-time Athens. She was buried at the Convent of Saint Mary Magdalene on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

According to lawyer and academic Alan Dershowitz, Carole, the mother of Prince William's wife, Catherine, is the daughter of Ronald and Dorothy Goldsmith, who he claims were Jews.

It's been speculated that Princess Diana's mother, Frances Shand Kydd was born Frances Ruth Roche, a Rothschild. If that weren't enough, the *London Daily Mail* reported that Diana is actually the biological daughter of Sir James Goldsmith, also a Jew.

According to some conspiracy theorists, this is all part of a plot hatched by the Rothschild family to establish a "Rothschild royal family",

and it relies on the Queen's and Duke of Edinburgh's supposed belief that that is the best guarantor of their family's future and safety.

Turning back to the 19th century, one of Queen Victoria's favourite people, after her beloved Prince Albert, was Benjamin Disraeli. Although baptised at 12, he was widely regarded during his time as Prime Minister as a Jew, including by his anti-Semitic rival, William Gladstone.

Responding to an opponent in the House of Commons, Disraeli once said, "I am a Jew, and when the ancestors of the right honourable gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the temple of Solomon." Disraeli also supported a Bill to remove the requirement that MPs swear a Christian oath of allegiance, a requirement which prevented Jews from assuming office. British Jews have been allowed to sit in Parliament since the passing of the Jews Relief Act in 1858.

Throughout his life, Victoria's son, the urbane and hedonistic Edward VII, surrounded himself with Jewish friends, and many of his numerous mistresses were also Jewish. One of his closest friends and riding partners was financier Ernest Cassel, and the anti-Semites of the time sometimes called the king's residence outside London, Windsor Cassel.

Edward VII's son would later receive a letter from a Jewish girl based in Israel. In 1935, when she was 12, Yehudit Ya'avetz wrote a



Prince Charles

congratulatory letter to King George V in Hebrew. She sent it from Haifa, where she had emigrated two years previously from Germany. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his coronation, Ya'avetz thanked the king for helping the Jewish people, and wrote, "I apologise dearly that my knowledge of the English language is still insufficient to express my feelings in this language, but I hope that the lilt of the Hebrew language will intermingle in the ears of His Majesty."

Prince Charles even has his own blue velvet kippa with a royal crest on it in silver to wear at Jewish weddings. So, whether the conspiracists are right or not, it seems that there is something of a bond between Britain's favourite family and the Jewish people which can be celebrated.

## Sandton Sinai kicks its way into World Cup

Every child at Sandton Sinai Nursery School had the opportunity to score a goal when they arrived at school in the morning of 14 June. This generated excitement and interest in the 2018 FIFA World Cup, and the countries and teams participating on the day of its opening.



Uriel Miller, Gabriel Benjamin, Raphi Finkel and Sam Girmun

## Celebrating South Africa at Sydenham

Jordan Kruger, Asher Kalmek and Taye Miller



Children at Sydenham Preschool celebrated their heritage by dressing in the colours of the South African flag, singing, dancing, and enjoying pap and gravy. The country's anthem, currency, food, and eleven official languages were just a few of the interesting facts the children were exposed to in lessons about the country.

## Torah Academy's outer-space experience



The pre grades of Torah Academy Nursery School recently turned a lesson in the solar system into a space night experience.

Clad in pyjamas, science fiction jet packs, and space helmets, the children and their parents experienced an evening filled with outer-space activities that culminated in a viewing of the stars.

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# Let's not lose sight of who we are and what we bring

A few years ago, my son Zac was elected chairperson of SAUJS (the South African Union of Jewish Students) at Wits University. He had just returned from a year in a yeshiva in Israel, and was determined to change the world for the good. Beginning with Wits campus.

He was ambitious and passionate (in the wonderful way that 19-year-olds are), and I recall so clearly trying to moderate his plans so that he could achieve some of his goals.

He needed to tackle them one by one with the final picture in mind. Whereas I don't remember all the details, I do know they included the creation of a Jewish student learning centre (open to all religions), shiurim (lectures), and prayer services.

He wanted to improve the quality of kosher food on campus, and make Jewish students proud of their identity.

As an Orthodox and committed Jew, Zac is a Zionist. But his love for Israel is not what drives him.

And yet, he spent the year defending Israel, negotiating so-called Israel Apartheid

Week with the university leadership, and trying to make sure that Jewish students were not hounded off campus.

There was little time for anything else. He defended Israel successfully that year, and I was proud of him. But he didn't achieve what he wanted in other areas.

Zac's story is the story of the Jewish community in South Africa.

Somewhere along the way, South African Jews have been narrowed into a very limited band of what it means to be a Jew. We could have been focussing on the incredible depth and magnificence of a rich tradition. We also could have been celebrating what it is that Jews have to offer South Africa and, indeed, the world. However, instead of being allowed to engage and debate national key points, Jews have been reduced to being defenders of Israel, victims of anti-Semitism, and social media warriors.

And it is our fault for allowing this to happen.

It is not necessarily an easy dynamic to change. It would be simple to suggest that

the Israeli Embassy and Zionist Federation take on and own the responsibility of defending Israel. We could suggest that the Chief Rabbi's office focus on Jewish life in South Africa, and that each community organisation fulfil the mandate it was created to fulfil.

But it is more complicated than that, and the reality is that with the level of hatred and anti-Semitism prevalent on social media, that might be a luxury we can ill afford.

What we can do is make sure that we don't lose sight of what it means to be a Jew. That means that we need to remember what Jews have contributed to South Africa, and what we are able to contribute.

It means appreciating our own faith in all its magnificence, and what it has to offer.

And, to remember that no matter how many times we are told that we are all racists, that we don't care about South Africa, and that we all supported apartheid – it's not true. The truth is that indeed, like any other group, there are those Jews who supported

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



apartheid, there are those who didn't contribute to the struggle, and there are those who remain racist.

But there are also those who fought and gave their lives to achieve democracy. There are those who recoil against racism, and who each day assist in the fight against poverty and the social ills of the country.

It is imperative that, unlike Zac at 19, we aren't distracted by those who constantly attack us. Our mission is to elevate ourselves and our environment, and to carry out the task of Tikkun Olam – making the world a better place.

I believe it is imperative that as Jewish South Africans, we don't allow ourselves to be reduced to the one-dimensional image we are told we are. As difficult as that might be.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

## Just how serious is this anti-Semitic spike in SA?

As reported elsewhere in this issue, there were a spate of widely publicised anti-Semitic incidents in South Africa last week.

Understandably, these have generated much alarm and anger in the Jewish community. None of the incidents involved physical violence, but several of the social media posts reported to us were so virulent and threatening as to necessitate a strong response.

Our press statement on the incidents was widely covered in the local and international media, and led to the ANC issuing a statement condemning them. Merely denouncing such unacceptable behaviour is obviously not enough, however. The Board, with the assistance of its legal representatives, is therefore in the

process of laying criminal and civil charges against three of the perpetrators, and we will ensure that these are followed through to a satisfactory conclusion.

When demeaning, defamatory, and threatening attacks on Jewish people are published in the public domain, it constitutes a clear-cut infringement of our community's constitutionally protected right to dignity and equality. In bringing to book those guilty of such acts, we also send a clear message that there is a price to be paid for propagating hatred against Jews, and that there are effective structures in place to make sure that those responsible pay that price.

While the Board is taking the latest attacks seriously, I would nevertheless caution our community not to overreact. It is unusual in South Africa for multiple anti-Semitic incidents to take place in close proximity to one another, as occurred last week, but we should not conclude from this that our community is now "under attack".



**Above Board**  
Shaun Zagnoev

In reality, even with the unexpected spike in incidents we have just experienced, levels of anti-Semitism in the first six months of 2018 were no higher than those recorded for the same period over the past two decades. Moreover, and as we have consistently pointed out in this column and on other forums, levels of anti-Semitism in South Africa are actually strikingly low when compared with those of other Diaspora countries of similar size. It is also noteworthy that serious cases of violence or damage and desecration of Jewish property occur very rarely.

While we should take seriously the prevalence of anti-Semitic sentiment in public discourse, particularly on social media, and take whatever steps we can to counter it, we also need to keep

everything in perspective and not conclude that our community is somehow under siege.

On the whole, the Jewish community members who responded to the above online attacks showed commendable restraint. Unfortunately, there were one or two exceptions, where respondents allowed themselves to be goaded into posting overtly racist comments in turn. There is no excuse for this, regardless of how much provocation there might be. It seriously undermines the morality of our cause, offends and alienates many who would otherwise support it and, it is worth pointing out, lays the perpetrator open to hate-speech charges in turn. I urge all members of our community to think before they tweet, and avoid posting emotional, knee-jerk responses to what they read.

• Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 to 13:00.

## Phalatse reinstated

>> Continued from page 4

context of her statement, and were offended as a result. "The publicised component of the speech," she wrote, "denied the listener the relevant context which was captured in the content preceding those parting remarks. This led to a lot of confusion." She pointed out that the unpublished component of her speech had addressed "the commitment of the DA and our government to achieving freedom, fairness, opportunity, and diversity in Johannesburg", a qualifier which she maintains places her words in the correct context.

The statement in isolation, she wrote, "does create the impression that I was positioning the City of Johannesburg on international relations matters without the requisite mandate, and for that I sincerely apologise. I would therefore like to clarify that I was not suggesting that the city has assumed a particular position in the Israel-Palestine matter, as this would fall outside of the city's direct mandate."

Harkening back to a statement made previously to the

SA Jewish Report about her desire to improve the lives of the city's residents, Phalatse recognised the ability the government had to meet people's needs. She wrote: "I fully appreciate the leadership of Mayor Mashaba, and his directive to focus on the needs of our residents rather than the historical focus on international relations.

"In my work, I have come to appreciate how many residents of this city live without the required access to basic healthcare. As a doctor, I have found that there is so much potential for our government to improve the lives of our people."

For this reason, she concluded, she eagerly awaited resuming work and contributing to the improvement of society despite her supposedly mistaken statements. "I look forward to returning to this work, regretting the extent to which my remarks have distracted from this."

At the time of going to print on Wednesday, the Mayor's office had not yet put out their statement reinstating her, but confirmed it would happen immediately.

## Whose shoulders are you dancing on? And why?

What would compel you to attend the funeral of someone you had never met? In the past ten days, two great men of the arts have passed on: Francois Theron, the Artistic Director of the National Children's Theatre, and veteran photographer David Goldblatt. This country is the poorer for losing them and the clarity they brought in confusing times.

Theron, who captivated children with classics such as *The Pied Piper*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, as well as local shows performed by professional actors, died last week. He was a maestro of children's theatre in Johannesburg. Exposing young children to high-quality theatre to ignite a lifelong flame in them was his goal.

Located in a heritage building in the old neighbourhood of Parktown, the theatre was founded in 1989 as a non-profit by Joyce Levinsohn. The current director is Moira Katz. Watching excited tots buzzing on the theatre's floor in front of the stage, and their parents and schoolteachers revelling in the spectacle from behind, was Theron's delight.

Theron was born in 1965, and grew up during apartheid. By the time he came of age as a director, however, apartheid had been dismantled, and in the past eight years of his career at the National Children's Theatre, he could concentrate on the children and performers, black and white.

But, in the past, apartheid affected everything. Great theatre confronting apartheid goes way back, much of it linked to the late Barney Simon, the co-founder in 1976 of Johannesburg's gutsy Market Theatre, home to the country's first non-racial theatre movement. One had to be brave to fight the regime. Contravening racial laws and working under threat of arrest, Simon staged provocative plays with multiracial casts to multiracial audiences, challenging apartheid bullies.

Ballerinas also work on stage, and

## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



during apartheid, South Africa's legendary prima ballerina, the late Phyllis Spira, was accepted at London's Royal Ballet School in 1959. She was the only South African to be awarded the Prima Ballerina Absoluta in 1964, classical European dance's highest accolade. It was awarded in recognition of her work as a powerful influence on cultural trends in dance. She was never directly affected by apartheid or the growing cultural boycotts of South Africa, nor was her work overtly political in any way. However, she is still respected as one of the icons of South African art.

While Spira captivated audiences with movement, another South African who made words dance like a ballerina during apartheid was Lionel Abrahams, described as the "yeast in the dough" of South African literature. A novelist, poet, editor, critic, essayist, and publisher, he was born with cerebral palsy, making him walk with undulating movements.

He was eventually confined to a wheelchair – the ballerina's opposite. But language was his joy, and critics said he "could make it dance as he himself, severely disabled from birth, could not". Until his death, he enriched writers and artists as teacher, editor and critic, delivering advice with a cheeky humour.

At some point, even for artists, the dancing stops. What is left is their life's work. Tuesday witnessed the funeral of Goldblatt, a great man who danced with his camera lens with great wisdom, and who will be sorely missed. He documented South African scenes in thousands of pictures over his lifetime, during and after apartheid, with the finest artist's touch.

Theron and Goldblatt were humble men who made magic. What is the value of standing at the graves of such giants, whether you knew them or not? It's all we can do to thank them for giving us their gift.

## Taekwondo 10 fight for SA

Ten students from Andre's Taekwondo Academy in Norwood have been selected to represent the South African National Team at the ATA (American Taekwondo Association) World Expo in Little Rock, Arkansas, from 12 to 15 July.

"It is a tremendous achievement to reach the highest level in your sport," said the Chief Instructor and founder of Andre's Taekwondo Academy, Sabumnim Andre van Tonder. "We salute each and every athlete that has pushed through the barriers to reach this prestigious goal."

The ATA International, founded in 1969, is the largest organisation in North America dedicated to the discipline of Taekwondo. This year's World Expo is expected to be attended by about 20 000 visitors from across the globe.

Out of the 10 candidates, four have received full national colours, and six presidential colours.

Pointing out that great success comes with great responsibility, Van Tonder said he was confident that his students would carry their responsibility with great success!



Back (l-r): Darren Gomer, Jason du Toit, Andre van Tonder, Gabriel Diamond, Aden Cohen-Louw. Middle (l-r): Marissa Katz, Da'el Basserabie, Eden Leibowitz, Mira Cohn. Front: Aron Cohen

## First ever Bidvest Maccabi Fun Run

Maccabi South Africa's first ever Fun Run hit the ground running on 17 June, with 425 participants, a similar number to Maccabi Great Britain's first Fun Run in 2007, which inspired this event.

Held at Huddle Park in Linksfield, Johannesburg, the Bidvest Maccabi Fun Run was part of a mindset change at the organisation to engage the wider community in sport by holding fun events. Maccabi SA believes it needs to strengthen sporting opportunities for the wider community.

The stature and capacity of the event was boosted by engaging Bidvest as headline sponsor,

and with the help of Global Maccabi Fun Run Coordinator Danielle Bensky, and Maccabi SA Sports Director Alain Nathan.

The 11th edition of the Maccabi Great Britain Fun Run took place in London on



Bidvest Maccabi Fun Run

24 June with more than 6 000 participants.

With perfect weather on the day of the Jo'burg run, families with strollers and dogs came out to take part in the 1km kiddies dash, as well as the more challenging 5km route. Food vendors, jumping castles and face painters were on hand to make sure the day had something for everyone. The Fun Run also benefitted 15 Jewish charities and organisations.

Neil Meyerowitz finished the 5km course in a blistering time of 19:24, an excellent result considering that the course was an off-road trail

through the park. A young Gilad Arieli finished hot on his heels, in 20:08. A special entry was Dr Vic Boston, who had completed his 42nd Comrades Marathon the previous week.

## King David boys excel in international soccer



Zach Taitz, Ariel Diner, and Gabriel Leeb

Zach Taitz, Ariel Diner, and Gabriel Leeb, all 12 years old, represented South Africa at the Volkswagen Junior Masters Tournament in mid-June as part of the SuperSport U13 team.

The tournament is an international soccer competition held every two years. This year's tournament, which included 19 countries, was held in Berlin, Germany. The boys made it to the quarter finals, losing 1-0 to Austria. Team South Africa placed sixth overall.

After the tournament, the boys were treated to a three-day trip to Euro Disney and Paris by VW South Africa.

## Letters

### CALLING PALESTINIANS 'INNOCENT AND UNARMED' IS A JOKE

Having just read the letter by Ben Robert Horowitz, I am not sure if Mr Horowitz is completely naïve, or living on some other planet. Horowitz's heart is breaking for the poor, innocent, unarmed Palestinians who are being oppressed by the Israelis.

I wonder if Horowitz's heart was also broken when the three young Israeli boys were murdered by these same Palestinians not so long ago, or the young mother whose throat was slit, together with her

young children and baby, by these same innocent Palestinians. I never saw any letters from him then.

To call the Hamas rioters innocent, unarmed protesters is a joke, since we all know that they were not only hurling rocks, but also Molotov cocktails, fire bombs and sending flaming kites into Israeli territory.

Does Horowitz not know that these terrorists were trying to breach the Israeli border to kill as many Israelis as they

could?

Does Horowitz's heart also bleed for the 850 000 Jews who were expelled from surrounding Arab countries, losing their homes and possessions in the process? Does he also want their property and land returned to them? He is free to send his message to Israel, but Israel knows that the vast majority of Jews are 100% behind it, and that's what counts. – Maurice Sackstein, Johannesburg



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# Putin invites Netanyahu, Abbas to World Cup final

TAMAR PILEGGI

Russian President Vladimir Putin has invited Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas to attend the World Cup final in Moscow next month.

Netanyahu is considering attending the 15 July game if Israeli security requirements can be met, according to reports in Hebrew-language media.

but Putin has previously tried to host talks between them.

Netanyahu and Abbas have not met for substantive talks since 2010, and regional peace efforts have continued to falter since a United States-led initiative collapsed in April 2014.

When Putin invited Netanyahu and Abbas for talks in 2016, both leaders expressed a willingness to meet each other face-to-face, but Moscow's efforts to broker the meeting

became bogged down in mutual accusations that the other side was unwilling to negotiate.

Reports of a possible Netanyahu-Abbas meeting come amid a US push to jumpstart a regional peace plan that has been blackballed by the Palestinian Authority amid anger over Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and his decision to move the US embassy there in May.

Senior White House Advisor Jared Kushner and US President Donald Trump's Mideast Peace Envoy, Jason Greenblatt, toured

the region last week, but did not meet any Ramallah officials. The Palestinians refused to meet the Trump officials, and the authority's leaders have criticised the Trump negotiating team in recent days.

The pro-Netanyahu daily, Israel Hayom, late last Sunday claimed that senior officials in Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates had indicated to the US team that they were prepared to back the Trump administration peace plan even if the Palestinian Authority rejected it. There was

no confirmation of the report, which quoted unnamed sources in Cairo and Amman.

Last Saturday, senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat accused Kushner and Greenblatt of trying to topple the Abbas-led government and dismantle the United Nations aid agency for Palestinian refugees. On Sunday, Erekat doubled down on his criticism, telling Israel's Channel 10 that the American negotiators were "not neutral", and predicting that their peace plan would fail.

In response, Kushner appealed directly to Palestinians in an interview published in the

Arabic language *Al-Quds* last weekend, accusing Abbas and the Palestinian leadership of not cooperating with peace efforts.

He alleged that Ramallah was "scared we will release our peace plan, and the Palestinian people will actually like it" because it would offer them a better life.

"The global community is getting frustrated with Palestinian leadership, and not seeing many actions that are constructive toward achieving peace," Kushner said. "There are a lot of sharp statements and condemnations, but no ideas or efforts with prospects of success."



Argentina edges out Nigeria in a nailbiting qualifier

Earlier, Palestinian soccer chief Jibril Rajoub announced that Abbas would travel to Russia for the game, and would also meet Putin. He told the official Palestinian Authority news outlet Wafa that the two leaders would discuss "bilateral relations and the latest political developments".

Putin has reportedly invited other world leaders to the World Cup final, which will be held at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow.

There was no indication that Netanyahu and Abbas would meet while in the Russian capital,

## Israeli soccer fans harassed at World Cup in Moscow

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

Soccer fans displaying Israeli flags at World Cup matches in Russia have been subjected to threats, harassment, and violence.

In one incident, a man wearing an Israeli flag around his shoulders was filmed as he was being chased around Moscow's Red Square by men shouting "Palestine", including one wearing a Tunisian flag. The man wearing the Israeli flag, who was also wearing a kippa, was filmed walking away from the growing group of hecklers along with another man who walked alongside him.

The hecklers shouted "Israel the whore!" in Arabic, "Get lost!" and "F\*\*\* you!", as the men they were pursuing walked away without responding to the taunts. About five hecklers then shouted "Viva Palestine!" while waving the Tunisian flag.

On Facebook, a page of supporters for the Tunisian team featured a post with a video

of the incident on Red Square. Decorated with icons showing a flexed muscular arm, it was titled, "When Tunisian chased Israelis in Moscow singing Palestine."

In a separate incident, the Israel Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) reported that a man waving an Israeli flag during a match between Portugal and Morocco had it snatched from him by fans who wanted to tear it up. But Israelis who were there during the match last Wednesday said a player had thrown his shirt into the crowd and fans were jostling to find it and keep it as a souvenir, the IBC later reported.

The month-long World Cup kicked off earlier this month, and is being hosted in 11 cities across the Russian Federation. Hundreds of thousands of fans have poured into Russia for the games, including many Israelis.

Soccer fans from many nations enjoy displaying their national, regional, or team flags at matches, regardless of whether teams from those places are playing. Unlike Tunisia, Israel did not qualify to participate in the World Cup.

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3. Add the tinned tomatoes and chicken or lamb stock. Stir then allow to simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Chop any large pieces of dried fruit such as the pears. (Prunes and apricots can be left whole.) Add the dried fruit to the pot with the sweet potato chunks and coriander. Stir and leave to simmer for a further 25 minutes or until the potato is cooked through.
5. During the last few minutes of cooking time place the couscous in a bowl. Pour the boiling water over the couscous, cover the bowl and leave to stand until all of the water has been absorbed. Fluff the couscous with a fork and stir in the parsley.
6. Dish the herby couscous onto warmed plates and top with the stew. Serve immediately.



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